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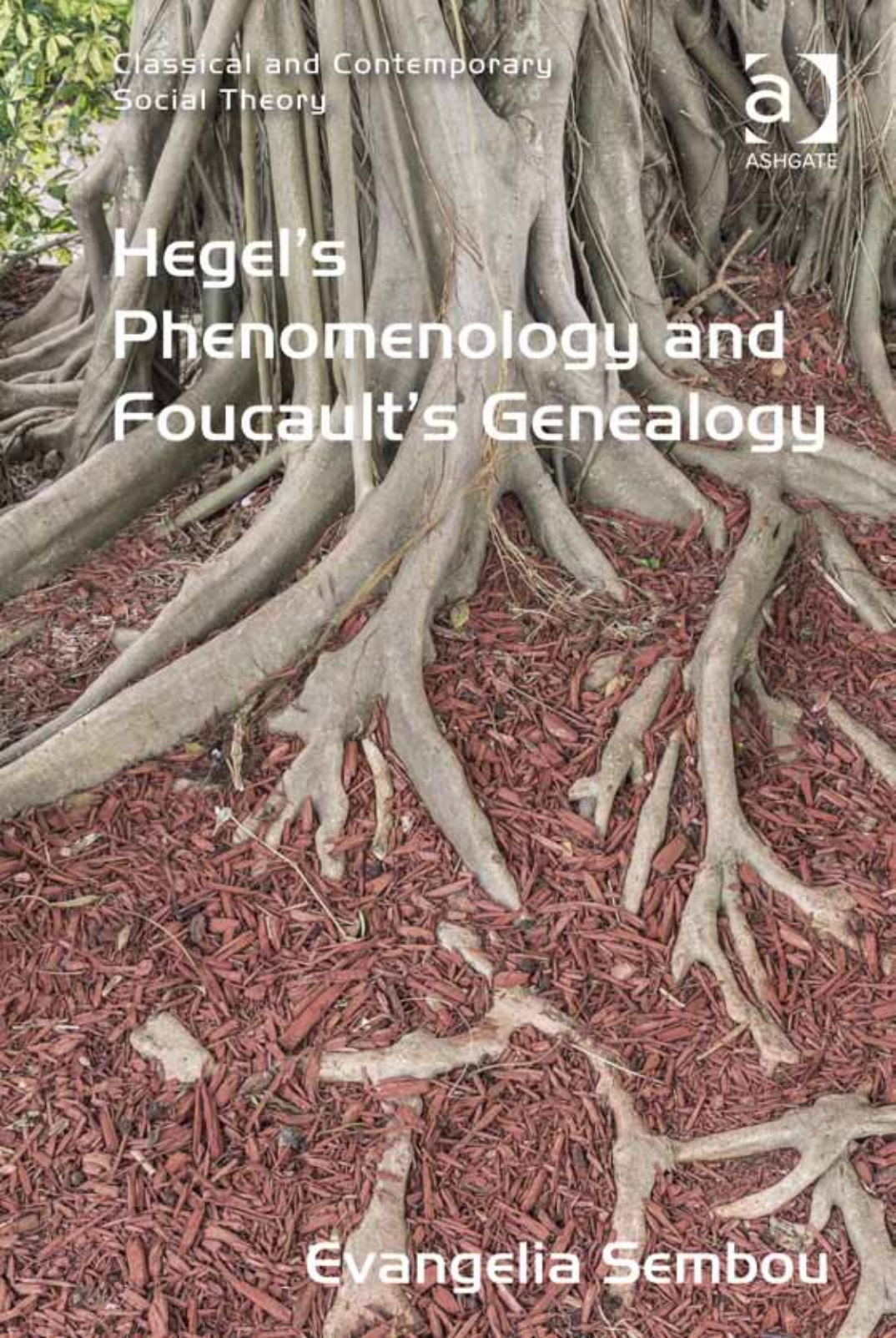

Evangelia Sembou

HEGEL'S PHENOMENOLOGY AND FOUCAULT'S GENEALOGY

Classical and Contemporary Social Theory

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Evangelia Sembou

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The book reflects my own philosophical itinerary. I studied Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology* and political philosophy as a graduate student at The University of Edinburgh during the academic year 1995–6. There I attended a course jointly taught by Mr. Richard Gunn and Dr. Kimberly Hutchings, and spent much fruitful time discussing Hegel's *Phenomenology* with Dr. Kimberly Hutchings at tutorials. While at Edinburgh I also wrote my Master's dissertation on the genealogies of Nietzsche and Foucault, also under the supervision of Dr. Kimberly Hutchings. In addition, at Edinburgh I benefited from a course on the philosophy of social sciences (the continental tradition) taught by Dr. Martin Kusch, from discussions with such social theorists as Dr. John Holmwood and Dr. John Orr, as well as from the work of Professor Russell Keat. I went on to write my doctoral thesis on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* with Professor Lord Plant at the University of Oxford (1996–2000). Obviously, I am indebted to all the above people for their constructive criticism, advice and encouragement. I have published articles on Hegel, as well as on Hegel and Foucault, and have presented my work on these topics at international conferences and workshops. I have also published a revised version of my doctoral thesis on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (2012). Moreover, I have benefited from attending the conferences of the Hegel Society of Great Britain. Many of the issues discussed in the book were re-thought while I was a tutor at Oxford University (2003–2007) and developed by independent study thereafter. Therefore, this book is the culmination of my intellectual development so far. Finally, and not least, I would like to thank Ashgate for making this book possible, the anonymous reviewers, Matthew Irving, the editor at Ashgate and Pam Bertram for preparing the index.

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Prologue

The purpose of this book is to compare and contrast Hegel's 'phenomenology' with Foucault's 'genealogy'. It sets out to explore the merits and demerits of each of these two approaches, with a view of benefiting from the combination of their respective strengths. To many it will seem that this project, if not impossible, is at least fraught with difficulties from the very beginning. Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy have traditionally represented two different strands in continental philosophy. On the one hand, Hegelian 'phenomenology' is about human conscious experience (the "experience of consciousness"). On the other hand, Foucauldian 'genealogy' has its roots in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, which traces origins in order to question entrenched beliefs and values. Hegel is a modernist and systematic thinker; at the same time, he is associated with teleological grand narratives. By contrast, Foucault is a post-modernist thinker, a post-structuralist and deconstructionist. Moreover, Hegel's rigorous, austere and academic style contrasts sharply with Foucault's unsystematic, provocative and gripping manner. Besides, in his remarks that are scattered in his works Foucault has often been very critical of Hegelianism, albeit at times quite ambiguous (e.g. Foucault 1966: 318, 338, 339, 342, 345; 2002a: 335, 356, 357, 361, 364; 1971: 74–79; 1981: 48–77; 1994c: 145; 1980: 114–115; 1994d: 43, 48, 49–50; 2002b: 241, 246–247, 248, 249; 2001: 29–30, 466–467; 2005: 28, 477–479). Yet, Foucault has had to define himself vis-à-vis Hegel and his thought relates to Hegelianism in significant ways. In this connection, it should not be forgotten that Foucault's *directeur de doctorat* was Jean Hyppolite, with whom he enjoyed a long relationship and who was one of the greatest French interpreters of Hegel.[1] To be sure, this study is informed by a particular reading of Hegel, which is revisionist and falls into that tradition of Hegel scholarship that advances a non-metaphysical and non-foundational understanding of Hegel.[2]

Central to my argument is that, despite their manifold differences, Hegelian 'phenomenology' and Foucauldian 'genealogy' make a common contribution to philosophy; they go beyond such distinctions as subject/object, theory/praxis, universal/particular, reason/nature and mind/body – distinctions that have characterized all traditional philosophizing. The foregoing dichotomies are part and parcel of foundational thinking, and the main thesis of this book is that

1 J. Hyppolite's *Genèse et Structure de la Phénoménologie de L' Esprit de Hegel* (1946) has been extremely influential.

2 See, among others: Hartmann 1972, Westphal 1979, Rose 1981, Houlgate 1986 and 2004, Maker 1994, Sallis 1995, Sembou 1999 and 2012a, Hutchings 2003.

Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogy point the way toward a non-foundational knowledge.

In Chapter 1 I shall explain why it is reasonable, and indeed challenging, to juxtapose Hegel and Foucault, and shall discuss Foucault's views on Hegel. According to Foucault, Hegelianism is a closed and absolutist system. However, Foucault's stance toward Hegelian philosophy is ambivalent and often vague.

In Chapter 2 I shall explore Hegel's 'phenomenology'. I shall show that Hegelian 'phenomenology' is about the emergence of science, human knowledge as it *appears*, and shall argue that it is an *experiential* philosophy. It is an experiential philosophy because it requires of the philosopher that he follow the development of the subject-matter from within, without interfering with its progression, and because it articulates the experience of consciousness as it develops through its inner divisions into spirit. 'Phenomenology' takes the object of knowledge to be an aspect of cognition itself; so the acquisition of knowledge and the development of the object are closely associated. I shall put forward the view that "absolute knowing" is not a positive doctrine, but the recognition that all attempts by humans to comprehend reality in terms of the 'correspondence theory of truth' have failed on their own terms. Therefore, Hegelian phenomenology is an *immanent critique* and introduces us to philosophical science (the *Science of Logic*) in a negative sense, that is, by demonstrating what philosophical science is *not*. In its attempt to make its subjective and objective aspects correspond, consciousness continually turns from one to the other. However, these successive reversals are not merely repetitive, for in the course of consciousness's experience both the subject and the object become increasingly more comprehensive. Thus, I shall argue, phenomenological development is not simply linear but circular as well, which means that human comprehension is one of concentric circles.

In Chapter 3 I shall examine Foucault's 'genealogy'. Starting with Foucault's essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", where Foucault lays out the features of his 'genealogy' through a discussion of Nietzsche, I shall explain in what sense genealogy attacks the notion of the 'origin'. I shall show that Foucauldian 'genealogy' challenges the idea of the 'origin' in the sense of "*Ursprung*", while it preoccupies itself with "*Herkunft*" and "*Entstehung*". Moreover, I shall demonstrate that 'genealogy' is a perspectival approach and that the role of the genealogist is to offer an interpretation of the past, which (interpretation) challenges established history. I shall show that genealogy is an "effective history" because it relativizes truth and debunks all constants by unmasking the power struggles which underlie each new interpretation. I shall then look at Foucault's 'analytics' of power, including his key term "power/knowledge" (« *pouvoir-savoir* »), before turning to a brief examination of Foucault's two famous genealogical works, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1. Finally, I shall show that, for Foucault, 'genealogy' and 'critique' are mutually complementary; genealogy *is* a critical enterprise. The starting-point of genealogical critique is a "principle of reversal"; that is, critique turns our deep-seated conceptions upside-down. According to Foucault, criticism has to be radical, to wit, to operate outside the accepted mode

of thought. The aim of genealogical critique is to provide us with an alternative interpretation in order to enable us to consider the possibility of becoming other than we are. Chapters 2 and 3 are thus expository in character, the purpose being to introduce the reader to Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy, thereby providing a platform for the argument of the book.

Chapter 4 will begin by looking at the differences between Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy. Briefly, Hegel's phenomenology is a holistic enterprise, whereas Foucault's genealogy is perspectival; the former is an hermeneutic undertaking, while the latter is an interpretative enterprise; the former is characterized by engagement, whereas the latter by detachment; the former practises an immanent (internal) critique, while the latter engages in a radical (external) critique. It will then turn to consider their common contribution to philosophy. I shall argue that both Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy question the conception of knowledge and truth prevalent within the analytic tradition of philosophy and philosophy of social science, namely, the 'correspondence theory of truth'. The 'correspondence theory' asserts that truth consists in a near perfect correspondence between thought (or a proposition) and the objective world. Hegelian phenomenology challenges the aforesaid model of knowledge by showing that conscious experience is a dynamic interrelationship of subject and object; for its part, Foucauldian genealogy disputes the 'correspondence theory' by demonstrating that both the subject and the objects of knowledge are constructed – more precisely, they are constituted in discourses. I shall show that the 'correspondence theory' is characteristic of foundationalism and will suggest that, by casting doubt on the 'correspondence theory', Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy alike also challenge foundationalism. According to foundationalism, all knowledge rests on (certain) presuppositions. By questioning the idea of an objective reality apart from human experience, both the Hegelian-phenomenological and the Foucauldian-genealogical projects also query the notion of the 'given'. Therefore, they pose a challenge to the view that all knowledge rests on presuppositions and, in so doing, they pave the way for a non-foundational knowledge, that is, a knowledge without presuppositions. I shall argue that Hegel's notion of "experience" ("*Erfahrung*") is much richer than Foucault's genealogies, hence the 'thickness' of the phenomenological exposition as compared with the much 'thinner' genealogical accounts. A possible charge against Hegelian phenomenology as an *immanent* critique is that it does not allow for the possibility of it being criticized from a standpoint external to it. This is possible in respect of Foucauldian genealogy, which practices an *external* critique by turning all deep-rooted beliefs and practices upside-down, thereby providing an alternative perspective. I shall argue that, ultimately, both Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy justify themselves, and can be assessed, only retrospectively.

In Chapter 5 I shall evaluate the significance and implications of Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy for the social sciences. I will then draw some conclusions from this study. I shall argue that, by combining the

insights of Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy, a social scientific knowledge without presuppositions *is* possible. A dialectical approach of 'phenomenology' and 'genealogy' starts from the phenomenological notion of "experience" and recognizes that humans are conscious beings. Simultaneously, however, it acknowledges that individuals in a given society are caught in power relations which may be beyond their control. Accordingly, it regards human beings as able to perceive the inadequacies and/or contradictions that are latent in their understanding of the world and social-cum-political life and to revise their understanding (*immanent* critique), while at the same time taking account of the fact that humans are implicated in relations of power of which they may not be fully aware and/or which they may not be able to render explicit. A genealogy of political institutions and social practices not only unearths the power relations that has produced them and heretofore justified their existence but, more importantly, enables us to see the limitations of current arrangements and, concomitantly, to think our social-cum-political life in different terms (*external* critique). This dialectical approach of 'phenomenology' and 'genealogy', therefore, challenges (neo-)positivism, while also exposing the shortcomings of phenomenology (hermeneutics).

Chapter 1
Setting the Stage

Hegel and Foucault

Foucault was introduced to philosophy by what was later to become France's most important interpreters of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely Jean Hyppolite. It was at Henri-V in 1945 that Jean Hyppolite recommended to his pupils Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Descartes's *Geometry* (Εριμπόν 2009: 36–37).[1] Jean Hyppolite was a bright teacher, who enthused his pupils; later Foucault called him "Hippal" or "teacher Hippal" (Εριμπόν 2009: 43). As his biographer says:

> Jean Hyppolite is undoubtedly the person who initiated Foucault in his future destiny. Foucault himself never ceased to declare his debt to this man whom he were to find several years later at the École normale and [whom he were] to succeed at the Collège de France. (Εριμπόν 2009: 38)[2]

As a teacher at Henri-V Hyppolite used his translation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which had been published in two volumes by Aubier in 1939 and 1940 (Εριμπόν 2009: 39). This translation together with his doctoral thesis *Genèse et Structure de la Phénoménologie de l' Esprit de Hegel*, published in 1946, made Hegel widely known to the French intellectual class. Of course, Jean Wahl's book, entitled *Le Malheur de la Conscience dans la Philosophie de Hegel*, had been published in 1929, but this concentrated on a specific theme of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In 1947 another important work on Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology* was published, to wit, Alexandre Kojève's *Introduction* à *la Lecture de Hegel*. So, as Vincent Descombes has noted, by 1945 in France Hegel had risen to "the top of classical philosophy" (1979: 24).[3]

As opposed to Kojève's reading of Hegel, Hyppolite's interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is existentialist. Hyppolite describes consciousness's "way of despair" as an "existential anxiety" (« *angoisse existentielle* ») (1946, Vol. 1: 23). Hyppolite referred to his affinity with the French existentialist current at a conference *à la Maison de France* in Uppsala in December 1955, entitled "Hegel

1 Eribon 1989. All references shall be from the Greek translation.

2 All translations in English are mine. Cf. "At the university … I had been trained, educated, driven to master those great philosophical machines called Hegelianism, phenomenology" Foucault (2002b: 241).

3 Cited in Εριμπόν (2009: 40). See also Canguilhem (1948–1949).

and Kierkegaard in contemporary French Thought" (Ερμπόν 2009: 41; Hyppolite 1971: 196). In his lecture at the aforesaid conference Jean Hyppolite said:

> We arrived late at a Hegelianism that had conquered the whole Europe except France, but we arrived via the *Phenomenology of Spirit* … and via the possible relation between Marx and Hegel. Of course there have been socialists and philosophers in France, but Hegel and Marx had not yet been incorporated in French philosophy. This has happened today. The discussion about Marxism and Hegelianism is on the agenda. (Ερμπόν 2009: 41–42; Hyppolite 1971: 976)

In 1955 Hyppolite published his famous *Études sur Marx et Hegel*.[4]

When Jean Hyppolite died in 1968 Foucault recalled:

> Those who were at these classes immediately after the war remember Mr. Hyppolite's lessons on the *Phenomenology of Spirit:* in this voice that never ceased to re-start, as if it were reflecting within its own pulse, we did not only discern the voice of a teacher: we heard something from the voice of Hegel, and perhaps even from the voice of philosophy itself. I do not believe that anyone could forget the power of this presence, neither the sense of closeness that breathed tirelessly. (Foucault 1969a: 131; cited in Ερμπόν 2009: 38)

Foucault also wrote an essay in honour of Hyppolite for a collective volume, which he edited (Foucault 1969b; Ερμπόν 2009: 43). In addition, he acknowledged his debt to Jean Hyppolite in his first lecture at the Collège de France in 1970. He said:

> … I consider that my greatest debt is to Jean Hyppolite. I am well aware that in the eyes of many his work belongs under the aegis of Hegel, and that our entire epoch, whether in logic or epistemology, whether in Marx or Nietzsche, is trying to escape from Hegel: and what I have tried to say just now about discourse is very unfaithful to the Hegelian logos. (Foucault 1981: 74)

But, he admits, the relation of his [Foucault's] thought to Hegel is complicated. In the same lecture Foucault proceeded to say:

> But to make a real escape from Hegel presupposes an exact appreciation of what it costs to detach ourselves from him. It presupposes a knowledge of how close Hegel has come to us, perhaps insidiously. It presupposes a knowledge of what is still Hegelian in that which allow us to think against Hegel; and an ability to gauge how much our resources against him are perhaps still a ruse which he is using against us, and at the end of which he is waiting for us, immobile and elsewhere … . If so many of us are indebted to Jean Hyppolite, it is because he

4 See especially « La Signification de la Révolution Française dans la "Phénoménologie" de Hegel », in Hyppolite 1955: 45–81.

> tirelessly explored, for us and ahead of us, this path by which one gets away from Hegel, establishes a distance, and by which one ends up being drawn back to him, but otherwise, and then constrained to leave him once again. (Foucault 1981: 74)

Indicative of Foucault's debt to his great master is the fact that in 1975, seven years after the death of Hyppolite, he sent to his wife a copy of *Discipline and Punish*,[5] with the dedication: "To Mrs. Hyppolite, in the memory of he to whom I owe everything". (Ερμπόν 2009: 39)

Foucault on Hegel

In *Les Mots et les Choses* (1966)[6] Foucault discusses three *epistemes* – that is, the "episteme of representation", characteristic of Renaissance thought, the "episteme of resemblance", typical of classical thought, and the "episteme", characteristic of modern thought. "*Episteme*" is the "*space* of knowledge" (Foucault 2002a: xxiv) characteristic of an epoch, that is to say, the "fundamental codes of a culture – those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices", as well as "the scientific theories or the philosophical interpretations which explain why order exists in general, what universal law it obeys, what principle can account for it, and why this particular order has been established and not some other" (Foucault 2002a: xxii). At the end of the eighteenth century, Kant's Copernican revolution[7] marked a shift from classical to modern thought. In Kantianism modern thought is caught between the "phenomenal" and "noumenal" worlds (Kant 1929: 257–275 and 297–484; Foucault 2002a: 347–351): "Man, in the analytic of finitude, is a strange empirico-transcendental doublet, since he is a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible". (Foucault 2002a: 347). It is in this context that Foucault refers to phenomenology.[8] However, for Foucault, phenomenology too fails to escape from the "empirico-transcendental doublet" (Foucault 2002a: 348–351).[9] Thus, "the whole of modern thought is imbued with the necessity of thinking the unthought …" (Foucault 2002a: 356; see Kant's

5 Foucault (1975) and English translation: Foucault (1991).

6 Translated in English as *The Order of Things* (2002a).

7 See Kant (1929: 22, 25n).

8 Hegel (1952 and 1977); Husserl (1922; 1930; 1950; 1954; 1966; 1970; 1973; 1985; 1991; 2004). On Hegelian phenomenology cf. Foucault 2002a: 356 ("*An sich* as opposed to the *Für sich*"). On Husserl's phenomenology cf. Foucault 1980: 66 and 2002a: 354–355, 356. On Hegel see also Foucault (2002a: 357). Foucault also refers to Husserl in an interview by Trombadori (1978); see Foucault (2002b: 241). In Foucault (1980: 66) and in his lectures on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* during 1981–1982 Foucault refers specifically to Husserl's *Krisis* (1954) (Foucault 2005: 28). On Husserl see also Gadamer (1969).

9 See also Foucault (2002a: 361).

"antinomies" in Kant 1929: 384–484).[10] There is also an ambiguous reference to Hegel's phenomenology in the section "The Retreat and Return of the Origin", where Foucault says:

> … from Hegel to Marx and Spengler we find the developing theme of a thought which, by the movement in which it is accomplished – totality attained, violent recovery at the extreme point of poverty, solar decline – curves upon itself, illuminates its own plenitude, brings its circle to completion, recognizes itself in all the strange figures of its odyssey, and accepts its disappearance into that same ocean from which it sprang. (Foucault 2002a: 364)

We shall see in the following chapter how the phenomenological development is not simply linear but circular as well. In Hegel's words, the "True" "is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning" (Hegel 1977: 10). Foucault proceeds to say:

> In opposition to this return, which, even though it is not happy, is perfect, we find the experience of Hölderlin, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, in which the return is posited only in the extreme recession of the origin … (Foucault 2002a: 364)

Foucault also refers to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* in the inaugural lecture he gave at the Collège de France, entitled "The Order of Discourse" (1970)[11] (Foucault 1981: 74–76). Paying his homage to Hyppolite, he says about his translation of Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology*:

> … the proof that Hegel himself is well and truly present in the French text is the fact that even Germans have consulted it so as to understand better what, for a moment at least, was going on in the German version. (Foucault 1981: 74)

In this lecture his position vi-à-vis Hegel's philosophy is ambiguous. To begin with, Foucault's thought is critical of all philosophies that take the "founding subject" as their basis: "Perhaps the idea of the founding subject is a way of eliding the reality of discourse". (1981: 65) It may well be that Foucault has Descartes in mind when he writes this ("*je pense, donc je suis*", Descartes 2000: 66).[12] But, according to Foucault, Hegel's philosophy is also a philosophy of the subject (Hegel's *Phenomenology* is about the "experience of consciousness").[13] Secondly, Foucault challenges Hegel's philosophy, when he says:

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10 For the influence of Kant on Foucault's thought see Hutchings (1996: 102–124).

11 Original: Foucault, M. 1971. *L'Ordre du Discours*. Paris: Gallimard.

12 Cf. Foucault (2002a: 351–358).

13 A similar criticism of Hegel was made by Habermas: "Hegel … could carry out his critique of subjectivity only within the framework of the philosophy of the subject".

> The idea of *universal mediation* is yet another way … of eliding the *reality of discourse*, and despite appearances to the contrary. For it would seem at first glance that by rediscovering everywhere the movement of a logos which elevates particularities to the status of concepts and allows immediate consciousness to unfurl in the end the whole rationality of the world, one puts discourse itself at the centre of one's speculation. But this logos, in fact, is only a discourse that has already been held, or rather it is things themselves, and events, which imperceptibly turn themselves into discourse as they unfold the secret of their essence. Thus discourse is little more than the gleaming of a truth in the process of being born to its own gaze. (Foucault 1981: 65–66)[14]

Thirdly, Foucault's genealogical approach, which would be developed at the Collège de France, would favour such notions as the "event", "*aléa*" and "discontinuity", rather than those of "consciousness" and "continuity" "with the correlative problems of freedom and causality" (Foucault 1981: 68; see also 69).

In an interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino in the ninety-seventies Foucault refers to "dialectic" as "a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton …" (Foucault 1980: 114–115; Foucault 1994c: 145). For him, "Neither the dialectic, as logic of contradictions, nor semiotics, as the structure of communication, can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of conflicts" (Foucault 1980: 114; Foucault 1994c: 145). This is a period when Foucault was involved in all sorts of social movements, including the anti-psychiatric movement, protests against the legal and penal system, movements in support of the rights of the homosexuals, etcetera (Foucault

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(1994a: 41). See also lecture XI (Habermas 1994a). For Habermas's criticism of Foucault see lectures IX and X (1994a).

14 My italics for emphasis. See the Preface of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, esp. "Being is then absolutely mediated … With this, the Phenomenology of Spirit is concluded … Their movement, which organizes itself in this element into a whole, is *Logic* or *speculative philosophy*". (Hegel 1977: 21–22) In a sense, Hegel's *Science of Logic* is a phenomenology of thought. See: "The Notion of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other than the deduction of it … .Thus pure science presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness. It contains *thought in so far as this is just as much the object in its own self, or the object in its own self in so far as it is equally pure thought*". (Hegel 1998: 49) In saying that the *Science of Logic* is a phenomenology, I am following Kimberly Hutchings (see: "as with the *Phenomenology* it [the *Science of Logic*] is structured in terms of an immanent development in which the internal inadequacies of particular formulations of concepts lead necessarily to reformulation. In the case of logic, however, this is the immanent dynamic of thought thinking itself in abstraction from any specific historical experience". 2003: 42). For Hegel's theory of knowledge see Φαράκλας (2000). I agree with Faraklas when he says that "Hegelian logic is not an ontology" (2000: 10). For him, Hegel belongs in the modern tradition of philosophy, which is founded upon "the epistemological question" (2000: 10). Cf. Φαράκλας (2000: 15–16).

2004: 5–6). As we shall see in Chapter 3, for Foucault, struggles can only be "local" (Foucault 1980: 132 and 2004: 5–6).

In an interview to Trombadori in 1978 Foucault said that it was Nietzsche, Blanchot, and Bataille who enabled him to "free" himself "from the dominant influences" in his "university training in the early [ninety-]fifties – Hegel and phenomenology. Doing philosophy in those days, and today as well in fact, mainly amounted to doing the history of philosophy – and the history of philosophy delimited, on the one hand, by Hegel's theory of systems and, on the other, by the philosophy of the subject, went on in the form of phenomenology and existentialism" (Foucault: 2002b: 246).[15] As mentioned above, immediately after World War II Hegel's phenomenology, based on the interpretations of Jean Wahl and Jean Hyppolite, "was really the best thing the French university could offer as the broadest possible mode of understanding the contemporary world" (Foucault 2002b: 246). It was during this time that Jean Paul Sartre was in vogue outside the academy, while Maurice Merleau-Ponty was "a meeting point between the academic philosophical tradition and phenomenology" (Foucault 2002a: 247).[16] However, the Hegelianism offered at university emphasized continuity and the primacy of the subject (Foucault 2002b: 248). Nietzsche offered a way out of Hegelianism by focusing on "the theme of discontinuity" (Foucault 2002b: 248) and by questioning "the category of the subject" (Foucault 2002b: 247). This latter is Foucault's "project of desubjectivation" (Foucault 2002b: 241). Foucault said to Trombadori:

> … in 1950, without knowing Marx very well, I was able to join the French Communist Party. Being a "Nietzschean communist" was really untenable and absurd. I was well aware of that. (Foucault 2002a: 249)

Yet, in 1950 Hegelian philosophy was unable to satisfy Foucault as an interpretation of the world he lived in (Foucault 2002a: 249). What is intriguing is that Foucault wrote his genealogical works in the 1970s.

In his lectures of 1981–1982 on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* Foucault refers to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* twice. In the first case he mentions Hegel, along with other nineteenth century philosophers, like Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger, in order to point out that what they have in common is an attempt "to link knowledge, the activity of knowing, and the conditions and effects of this activity, to a transformation in the subject's being". It is precisely this transformation in the subject's being that Foucault

15 My square brackets.

16 Sartre's *L' Être et le Néant* was published in 1943, while Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la Perception* appeared in 1945. Sartre's philosophy was influenced by Husserl and Heidegger, whereas Merleau-Ponty's thought was influenced by Husserl and Marxism. As is well-known, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre founded *Les Temps Modernes* in 1945 (Miller 2002: 336).

terms "spirituality" (Foucault 2001: 29–30; quoted from Foucault 2005: 28). On the second occasion, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is exalted. Here Foucault focuses on "*bios*". Life, Foucault says, is a test in two senses. First, "in the sense of experience", to wit, "the world is recognized as being that through which we experience ourselves, discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to ourselves". Second, in the sense of *bios* as exercise (Foucault 2005: 486). The end of this lecture deserves to be quoted in full:

> The challenge is this: How can what is given as the object of knowledge (*savoir*) connected to the mastery of *tekhne*, at the same time be the site where the truth of the subject we are appears, or is experienced and fulfilled with difficulty? How can the world, which is given as the object of knowledge (*connaissance*) on the basis of the mastery of *tekhne*, at the same time be the site where the "self" as ethical subject of truth appears and is experienced? If this really is the problem of Western philosophy – how can the world be the object of knowledge (*connaissance*) and at the same time the place of the subject's test; how can there [by][17] a subject of knowledge (*connaissance*) which takes the world as object through a *tekhne*, and a subject of self-experience which takes this same world, but in the radically different form of the place of its test? – if this really is the challenge of Western philosophy, you will see why *The Phenomenology of Mind* is the summit of this philosophy. (Foucault 2005: 487)

17 This should read "be".

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Chapter 2
Hegel's Phenomenology[1]

What is 'Phenomenology'?

Hegelian *Phenomenology* is about the emergence of science; it is human knowledge as it *appears* (*PhG*: 26, *PhS*: 15). Hegel subtitles the *Phenomenology of Spirit* "science of the experience of consciousness", so, first of all, we have to determine what exactly the relationship between "spirit" and "consciousness", "phenomenology" and "experience" is. "Consciousness" is "spirit" in its immediacy, that is to say, in its inception. At the beginning, "spirit" as "consciousness" is internally divided into the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. "Consciousness" develops into "spirit" and the stages along this way appear as "shapes of consciousness". The pathway that consciousness follows in this development constitutes its "*experience*" (*PhG*: 32, *PhS*: 21). Accordingly, "phenomenology of spirit" denotes the experience of consciousness as it develops into spirit.[2] Consciousness's journey is the appearance or the genesis of science; "spirit" which has developed out of "consciousness" and "knows itself as Spirit" is "*Science*" ("*Wissenschaft*") (*PhG*: 24, *PhS*: 14). For this reason the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a scientific exposition; it is the *science* of the experience of consciousness (*PhG*: 32, *PhS*: 21).[3] The foregoing suggest that *phenomenology* is an *experiential* philosophy. This means that what phenomenology demands of the philosopher is "surrender to the life of the object, or, what amounts to the same thing, confronting and expressing its inner necessity" (*PhG*: 45, *PhS*: 32). Hegelian 'phenomenology' is not concerned with the cognitive process (i.e. the mental acquisition of knowledge) in abstraction from the subject-matter at hand or the object under investigation. Rather, "immersed in the material, and advancing

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1 For my full-length study of Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology* see Sembou (1999 and 2012a).

2 This means that the "phenomenology of spirit" and "science of the experience of consciousness" coincide and that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a unitary work. On this I agree with, among others, Hoffmeister 1952: XXXIV–XXXV, Labarrière 1968: 21–27, Pöggeler 1973: 199–208 and Marx 1981: 70 / 1975: 53. For a different view see Haering 1934.

3 An important question is whether and to what extent the first genitive in the subtitle "science of the experience of consciousness" is subjective, that is, whether it is science itself which is accomplished as an experience of consciousness or whether this first genitive really means 'about'. The answer is that the first genitive is not subjective; the *Phenomenology of Spirit* does not consist in a science which is accomplished as an "experience of consciousness"; rather, it is a science *about* the "experience of consciousness". On this point see Marx 1981: 21 and 1975: 1.

with its movement", 'phenomenology' considers the object of knowledge to be an aspect of cognition itself, so that the acquisition of knowledge and the development of the object go hand in hand (*PhG*: 45, *PhS*: 32–33).

Therefore, 'phenomenology' challenges the common philosophical assumption that, prior to an investigation of the nature of reality, the philosopher has to be clear as to what is involved in cognition, in particular, as to the method to be employed in her attempt to comprehend truth. Traditionally, cognition has been understood as either an "instrument" or a "medium". What underlies this preoccupation with the "instrument" and "medium" is, first, a belief that there are many different modes of cognition and that, depending on the object of knowledge, one may be more suitable than another; and, second, the idea that cognition can only be limited, so that one must start by determining its nature and scope. This hesitation on the part of the philosopher leads her to the conclusion that it is impossible to grasp reality as it is and that the "Absolute" (truth) is completely separated from "cognition". On the one hand, the instrument employed in the course of a philosophical enquiry affects (and alters) reality. On the other hand, albeit passive, a medium does not enable the philosopher to reach reality as it is; rather, she gets to know reality "only as it exists through and in this medium" (*PhG*: 63–64, *PhS*: 46).[4] Traditional epistemology would try to make good any results brought about by the instrument or the medium by taking cognizance of the way(s) the instrument or medium utilized operate.[5] In the case of an instrument, this consideration allows the researcher to remove from the end-result what has been produced by the instrument; yet, this is to no avail because the researcher is left with what he had before the application of the instrument (*PhG*: 64, *PhS*: 46–47). And, if the instrument merely brings the "Absolute" (true reality) nearer to the philosopher without altering it, there is no point to engage in this procedure in the first place. Actually, the "Absolute" is not beyond human experience and thereby incomprehensible but part of human reality. It is already present before us, so the application of an instrument for apprehending it is redundant; what is more, the use of an instrument is nothing but a "ruse" which gives the impression of doing something while not doing anything at all.[6] Similarly, where a medium has been used, it makes no sense to try and acquire knowledge of its law in order to take

4 The metaphor of cognition as a "medium" refers to Johannes Heinrich Lambert. Johannes Hoffmeister (1952) has noted that Lambert was the first philosopher to use the term "phenomenology" in his *Neues Organon* to designate the fourth part of his philosophical system („Phänomenologie oder Lehre von dem Schein" / "Phenomenology or Theory of Appearance") (VII ff). See also Lambert 1764.

5 This is the epistemology that had characterized philosophy from René Descartes to Immanuel Kant. Traditionally 'epistemology' meant 'theory of knowledge' or a 'method' whereby one could acquire knowledge of one's subject-matter.

6 Likening the "Absolute" to a bird and the "instrument" to a lime-twig that catches it, Hegel says jokingly that the "Absolute" "would surely laugh our little ruse to scorn, if it were not with us, in and for itself, all along, and of its own volition". *PhG*: 64, *PhS*: 47.

away this from the end-result, because cognition is not its law ("the refraction of the ray") but the way ("the ray") truth relates to us and, should this be removed, nothing would be left (*PhG*: 64, *PhS*: 47).

'Phenomenology' acknowledges that "the fear of falling into error sets up a mistrust of Science". It also recognizes that this fear *presupposes* a whole set of ideas, such as cognition is an instrument or a medium, that there is a distinction between the philosopher and cognition, and that "the Absolute" (truth) is distinct from cognition. As a result of this latter idea, traditional epistemology is led to the following paradox; it assumes that truth is beyond cognition and yet that cognition is true, "an assumption whereby what calls itself fear of error reveals itself rather as fear of the truth". 'Phenomenology' reverses this fear by casting doubt on it (*PhG*: 64–65, *PhS*: 47). Thus, where traditional epistemology attempts to deal with the idea of the separation of the absolute from cognition by claiming that, despite cognition's inability to grasp absolute reality, it can nonetheless comprehend different sorts of truth, 'phenomenology' questions all these assumptions. In fact, the emergence of science sets all these assumptions and fears aside. However, when science comes out,[7] it is itself no more than an *appearance*; by coming forth, it presents itself as a phenomenon.[8] As such, it has not as yet developed. Therefore, it is the same thing to regard science as "appearance" because it emerges alongside another mode of knowledge and to consider that other faulty mode of knowledge to be one of its expressions. No matter how one views apparent science, science must free itself from its appearance and become *true* (i.e. actualized) science; for, in its inception, science cannot justify itself against another mode of knowledge. This latter it cannot dismiss by simply claiming that it is superior, for this would be an empty assurance and would be on the same level as the assurance of that other mode of knowledge. Nor, for that matter, can it appeal to that other mode of knowledge in order to show what it promises to be in the future, for it would only be appealing to an imperfect knowledge, "… to an inferior form of its being, to the way it appears, rather than to what it is in and for itself" (*PhG*: 65–66, *PhS*: 47–49 [quote 49]).

"Phenomenal Knowledge"

Given that the *Phenomenology* is about "phenomenal knowledge", it is not science proper. Rather, "… it can be regarded as the path of the natural consciousness which presses forward to true knowledge". And "natural consciousness" is only "the Notion of knowledge", not "real knowledge" (*PhG*: 66–67 *PhS*: 49). The

7 The German reads: "Aber die Wissenschaft darin, daß sie *auftritt*, ist sie selbst eine Erscheinung" (*PhG*: 66) (my italics). The verb "*auftreten*" is used, *inter alia*, in theatre and means to "make one's entrance", "appear (on stage)", *Standard German Dictionary* (1993: 67). Miller appositely renders this as "comes on the scene" (*PhS*: 48).

8 "Wissenschaft als Phänomen" is implied in the title *Phänomenologie des Geistes*.

adjective "natural" signifies consciousness's "inorganic nature" – that is to say, the natural world, culture, mores, religion and social-cum-political institutions which *determine* and *condition* consciousness. At the very beginning, consciousness is in immediate, unreflective, unity with its "inorganic nature". In the course of its development it comes to cognitively appropriate its "inorganic nature" and to comprehend the rationality inherent in it; it acquires self-awareness, finds itself at home in the world and comes to see nature, culture and social-cum-political reality as its own making, while at the same time reflecting on its own becoming (*PhG*: 26–27, *PhS*: 15–17). As it develops, and in its attempt to comprehend the world and its place within it, "natural consciousness" appears as "phenomenal knowledge". In other words, "phenomenal knowledge" is the cognitive aspect of "natural consciousness". Merold Westphal has remarked that the German phrase "*das erscheinende Wissen*" ("phenomenal knowledge") is ambiguous; it can mean either "knowledge as a phenomenon", i.e. knowledge as an object of investigation, or "phenomenal knowledge", a sense which "carries a pejorative connotation derived from Kant" (1979/1990: 8–9). I think Hegel had both senses in mind. His aim was to show that "phenomenal knowledge" gradually develops into 'true' knowledge or science. *Contra* Kant, for Hegel, "phenomenal knowledge" is not separated from true reality (the thing-in-itself). As Kimberly Hutchings puts it:

> Phenomenology is … the Hegelian equivalent of Kantian critique; like Kantian critique it paves the way to science. According to Hegel, however, it does so without predetermining its own failure by presuming the inadequacy of phenomenal knowledge in advance. (2003: 35–36)

Thus, we cannot know at this stage in what respects philosophical science is different from phenomenology (2003: 36).[9] However, since human consciousness in its natural state thinks it is "real knowledge", "this path has a negative significance for it, and what is in fact the realization of the Notion, counts for it rather as the loss of its own self; for it does lose its truth on this path". In its development consciousness loses its old certainties and begins to doubt: "The road can therefore be regarded as the pathway of *doubt*, or more precisely as the way of despair" (*PhG*: 67, *PhS*: 49).

The foregoing sentence makes it clear that 'phenomenology' is not ordinary scepticism (a "pathway of doubt"), but rather a more radical form of scepticism (a "way of despair"). Ordinary scepticism questions a received truth only to come to accept it after careful scrutiny. It is

> the *resolve* … not to give oneself over to the thoughts of others, upon mere authority, but to examine everything for oneself and follow only one's own

9 Apart from Hutchings, other scholars who read Hegel's *Phenomenology* as a reconstruction of Kant's critical project are Rose 1981 and Pippin 1989. My reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* owes much to Rose and Hutchings.

> conviction, or better still, to produce everything oneself, and accept only one's own deed as what is true. (*PhG*: 67, *PhS*: 50)

This is the form of scepticism prevalent in the philosophical tradition since Descartes.[10] By contrast, phenomenological scepticism is "thoroughgoing" and consists in "the conscious insight into the untruth of phenomenal knowledge". Therefore, phenomenological scepticism is not the doubt which is dispelled right away but "the detailed history of the *education* [*Bildung*] of consciousness itself to the standpoint of Science"; it turns against "phenomenal consciousness" in all the forms it takes in the course of its development; and it leads consciousness to despair about all accepted beliefs, ideas and values (*PhG*: 67–68, *PhS*: 50).

Crucially, the phenomenological exposition of consciousness's "way of despair" is not solely negative. Surely, it seems to be that way to "natural consciousness" itself and on its route to science it goes through a form of consciousness that is characterized precisely by this negative view of scepticism. Negative scepticism "is just the scepticism which only ever sees pure nothingness in its result and abstracts from the fact that this nothingness is specifically the nothingness of that *from which it results*". However, phenomenological scepticism has a positive aspect as well, since out of what is negated there emerges something *determinate*. Thus, whereas purely negative scepticism cannot go any further after it has negated something and can only move on if something else appears on the way, phenomenological scepticism is an *immanent* development wherein a negation is a "*determinate* negation", so that a new form arises out of and as soon as the previous form dies out (*PhG*: 68–69, *PhS*: 50–51 [quote 51]).[11] When the bud vanishes, the plant blossoms; and when the fruit appears, the blossom dies away. These forms appear to be "mutually incompatible":

> Yet at the same time their fluid nature makes them moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is as necessary as the other; and this mutual necessity alone constitutes the life of the whole (*PhG*: 10, *PhS*: 2).[12]

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10 Here Hegel is referring to the first rule of Descartes's method:

> … never to accept anything for true, which I did not evidently know to be such: that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitation and prejudice; and to comprise nothing more in my judgements than what would be presented so clearly and so distinctly to my mind that I would have no occasion to doubt it (2000: 49).

The above is my translation. Famously, for Descartes, there was only one thing that he could not doubt, that is, his own existence. This was so, he thought, because, if he was to doubt anything, then he had to exist (2000: 66–67).

11 Cf. *PhG*: 33–34, 39; *PhS*: 22–23, 27.

12 Thus, Hegel's method does not take the form of "*thesis-antithesis-synthesis*", as it is commonly believed (see also Φαράκλας 2000: 10). It is not even a method; rather, it is an approach. Hegel challenges the notion of a method applied externally to the subject-matter at hand.

The progression of "natural consciousness" to science is *necessary*. In this development both the *telos* and the actual progression are predetermined for "phenomenal knowledge". Eventually, "phenomenal knowledge" reaches a stage where it does not need to go beyond itself; this is its *telos*, namely, science. But "natural consciousness" despairs because it is unable to see that every negation on the way is *by necessity* a *determinate* negation. From its standpoint, whatever happens to it is accidental and due to external factors. "Thus consciousness suffers this violence at its own hands: it spoils its own limited satisfaction" (*PhG*: 69, *PhS*: 51).

Immanent Critique

The conception of the cognitive process as an "instrument" or "means" is underpinned by the idea of a standard or criterion by means of which to measure one's knowledge (*PhG*: 70, *PhS*: 52). However, as well as questioning the aforesaid conception of cognition, 'phenomenology' challenges the notion of an external criterion. As mentioned above, in its inception, "spirit" as "consciousness" is internally divided into the knowing subject and the object of knowledge; that is, subject and object are two different aspects or elements of consciousness itself. Therefore:

> Consciousness simultaneously *distinguishes* itself from something, and at the same time *relates* itself to it, or, as it is said, this something exists *for* consciousness; and the determinate aspect of this *relating*, or of the *being* of something for a consciousness, is *knowing*. (*PhG*: 70, *PhS*: 52)

Given that consciousness is the dynamic cognitive interrelation between the knowing subject and the known object, there is no need of an external criterion. Rather, "Consciousness provides its own criterion from within itself, so that the investigation becomes a comparison of consciousness with itself". When taken severally, subject and object are mere abstractions. There can only be a subject that knows an object and an object as known by the subject. Conscious existence consists in this interrelation. And consciousness tests one of its aspects (say, the subject) against the other (the object). In its distinctive Hegelian sense, the "Notion" ("*Begriff*") is reality as comprehended in thought, hence both objective and subjective. This aspect of the "Notion" that pertains to material reality Hegel terms "object" or "in-itself", while that aspect that relates to thought he calls "knowledge" or "for another". Accordingly, if one takes the "Notion" to be "*knowledge*" and the "essence" or the "*True*" (viz. the permanent factor) to be the "*object*", then this "object" is the criterion whereby consciousness measures the validity of its "knowledge"; so "the examination consists in seeing whether the Notion corresponds to the object". Conversely, if one takes the "*Notion*" to be the "*essence*" (i.e. the permanent factor) and the "*object*" to be as it exists

"*for an other*", then the "Notion" is the criterion whereby consciousness measures the truth of the "object"; here "the examination consists in seeing whether the object corresponds to its Notion". Obviously, the two procedures are the same (*PhG*: 71, *PhS*: 53).[13]

When consciousness finds that its two aspects ("moments") do not correspond, it changes the one. But, in changing this, consciousness's other aspect changes as well. For example, when consciousness changes its knowledge (the subject) in order to make it correspond to the object, the object changes too, for it used to be the object as known but that subject. The subject is now confronted by a different object ("*Gegenstand*" literally means that which stands opposed to something else), so what consciousness (its subjective aspect) regarded as the "*in itself*" turns out not to be "an *in-itself*" but "only an in-itself *for consciousness*". Because Hegelian phenomenology offers an account of consciousness's self-examination, it constitutes an *immanent critique*. This means that all the philosopher has to do is "to look on" (*PhG*: 72, *PhS*: 54). Every time that consciousness changes its object it effects a "*dialectical* movement" on itself. This has an impact on both its aspects (subject/knowledge and object) and constitutes its "*experience*" ("*Erfahrung*"). In the course of this experience it appears that consciousness constantly has two objects, to wit, the object of knowledge or "the *in-itself*" and the "in-itself" *for consciousness*. This latter seems to be consciousness's knowledge of the object. However, in reality, there is never an "in-itself" but only an "in-itself" "*for consciousness*", for consciousness is precisely this dynamic cognitive interrelation between subject and object. Thus it is irrelevant whether there are objects apart from (beyond) human consciousness. What matters is that the objects with which human consciousness interacts acquire their significance through this interaction. In the course of consciousness's experience "the True" is "the being-for-consciousness of this in-itself". Clearly, this latter is not the same all the way throughout consciousness's phenomenological experience but constantly changes (*PhG*: 73, *PhS*: 55).

From the point of view of the experiencing consciousness, the untruth of the first object becomes evident once it runs across another object. From the perspective of the philosopher, however, the new object emerges out of "a *reversal of consciousness itself*" (*PhG*: 73–74, *PhS*: 55). So in 'phenomenology' critique

13 Although Hegel describes consciousness's self-examination in correspondence language, I will show below that the purpose of his *Phenomenology* is to overcome the conception of truth as correspondence. Of course, there has been a debate over Hegel's conception of truth, specifically, over whether his understanding of truth is one of correspondence or consensus. For the view that Hegel holds a correspondence theory of truth see Harris 1997 and Westphal 1997. For the view that Hegel subscribes to a consensus theory of truth, see Forster 1998. Hutchings seems to suggest that Hegel unites different accounts of truth (2003: 32–44 and 102–110). Finally, Maker advances the view that the *Phenomenology* constitutes a critique of the 'correspondence theory of truth' (1994: Part I). As will become evident later in this chapter, I share Maker's thesis. I will discuss Hegel's conception of truth further in Chapter 4.

is immanent; it is not carried out from a viewpoint external to 'phenomenology' (i.e. the phenomenological experience of consciousness); rather, in Hegelian 'phenomenology' critique is part and parcel of the development of consciousness to philosophical science. More precisely, critique consists in the successive reversals of human consciousness as it strives to make its subjective and objective aspects correspond. Thus, critique is an essential aspect in consciousness's experience.

In a nutshell, 'phenomenology' is the immanent development of truth as it is experienced (of "phenomenal knowledge"). It follows that phenomenological science encompasses the entire "experience of consciousness", the truth of spirit in its totality. This means that the different aspects ("moments") of this truth are not "abstract moments" but can only be understood as integral parts of the whole; for this reason they appear as shapes of consciousness. In the course of its immanent experience, consciousness arrives at a certain stage at which its appearance becomes identical with its essence; when this happens the science of appearance becomes coextensive with science proper. And when consciousness comes to comprehend itself in its own becoming it reaches the absolute standpoint of science ("absolute knowledge") (*PhG*: 74–75, *PhS*: 56–57).[14]

The Role of the Phenomenological 'We'

Although consciousness effects a dialectical movement on itself in the course of its experience, it itself is not in the position to understand how the transition from the one object and its knowledge to the next comes about. Therein lies the significance of the phenomenological 'we'. This is the philosopher who, as mentioned above, observes the "experience of consciousness"; the philosopher (Hegel and his readers) can discern the consecutive reversals of consciousness. More importantly, the task that the philosopher sets himself is to elevate the series of experiences (reversals) of consciousness into "a scientific progression" (*PhG*: 74, *PhS*: 55). This he does by perceiving the *determinate* negations of consciousness; that is, the philosopher is able to see that a new object emerges out of the negation of an object by consciousness, so that the result of the negation of the first object is not purely negative ("an empty nothing"):

> … it is just this *necessity* itself, or the *origination* of the new object, that presents itself to consciousness without its understanding how this happens, which proceeds for us, as it were, behind the back of consciousness. (*PhG*: 74, *PhS*: 56)[15]

14 For a reading of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as theory of knowledge see Faraklas (2000: 186–264).

15 The emphasis on "necessity" is mine.

Thus, where consciousness finds itself confronted by a new object, the philosopher (Hegel and the readers who follow his phenomenological account) sees a movement and an immanent development. Because of the philosopher's discernment of the way consciousness effects a transition from one object to the next (viz. of its successive reversals), the experience of consciousness acquires *necessity*; that is to say, each of the forms of consciousness along the road to philosophical science are necessary because they are presented phenomenologically by the philosopher. This implies that outside Hegel's phenomenological exposition (i.e. outside all context), there would be no such necessity. By virtue of this necessity, the "phenomenology of spirit" as "the way to Science is itself already *Science*"; it is "the Science of the *experience of consciousness*" (*PhG*: 74, *PhS*: 56).

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that 'phenomenology' is an *experiential* philosophy. It is experiential both because it is about the "experience of consciousness" and because it requires of the philosopher that he "surrender to the life of the object …" (*PhG*: 45, *PhS*: 32). In other words, the philosopher's (Hegel's) role is to live the "experience of consciousness" from within. In presenting this experience in the form of a phenomenological account, his task is to render explicit what is implicit therein; this he does by assuming the standpoint of each of the "shapes of consciousness" and articulating what is involved in each form of understanding from the point of view of that form of understanding itself. But, in rendering explicit the implications of each "shape of consciousness", Hegel unmasks the inadequacies and inherent contradictions thereof; as the experiencing consciousness travels its way towards 'true' knowledge, each one of its "shapes" proves to be inadequate on its own terms. In constantly testing its subjective and objective aspects against one another, human consciousness engages in self-criticism. So the philosopher (Hegel) does not import any external criteria by means of which to assess the validity of each one of consciousness's claims and worldviews. He merely observes consciousness's self-examination and comments on it.[16] In this way he turns consciousness's phenomenological experience into a science. Simultaneously, Hegel guides the observing consciousness of the reader(s) into comprehending the "experience of consciousness" as its own education (*Bildung*). So the readers, too, immerse themselves into the immanent development of consciousness and, as a result, adopt an inside perspective. It is this engagement of the philosopher (Hegel and the reader(s)) with the account that is the most significant aspect of Hegelian phenomenology as an approach.[17] In what follows I will offer a brief account of the "experience of consciousness" in order to make clear the nature of the Hegelian-phenomenological approach to reality. It is not possible to go into great detail here, therefore I will give a more detailed exposition only of the first "shape of consciousness".

16 For the sense in which Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a descriptive enterprise see Kojève (1947: 447–528), Heidegger 1950 and 1970, and Dove 1970.

17 See also Sembou (2013).

Consciousness's "Way of Despair"

The "knowledge or knowing" ("*Wissen*") with which Hegelian phenomenology begins is "immediate knowledge" or knowledge "of what simply *is*". In accordance with the nature of this form of knowledge that is the object of the phenomenological account, the philosopher's (Hegel's and his readers') approach to it is equally "*immediate* or *receptive*". In "*ap*prehending" phenomenal knowledge in its immediacy, 'we'[18] (the phenomenological observers) should not attempt to *com*prehend it". Rather, the philosopher observes and proceeds to render explicit what is involved in this form of knowledge from the point of view of that form of knowledge itself. Given its immediacy, this mode of knowledge appears to be immensely rich in terms of content and scope. For this reason "sense-certainty appears to be the *truest* knowledge". However, from the point of view of the philosophical observer, this knowledge is certain of "the most abstract and poorest *truth*"; for it can say no more about the object of its knowledge than that "it *is*". Therefore, the criterion (i.e. immediacy) by which sense-consciousness measures its knowledge does not correspond (is not adequate) to the wealth of actual knowledge. Simultaneously, consciousness is no more than "a pure 'I'". The philosopher puts himself in the place of sense-consciousness (adopts an inside perspective) and speaks for it: "I, *this* particular I, am certain of *this* particular thing …" (*PhG*: 79, *PhS*: 58).[19]

In rendering explicit what is implicit in this immediate form of knowledge, the philosopher uncovers that, actually, sense-certainty is not as immediate as it seemed to be; rather, it consists of two aspects, a subject and an object. As mentioned above, these aspects are inherent in consciousness itself and consciousness is the dynamic cognitive interrelation thereof. So consciousness's subjective and objective aspects are both "*mediated*": "I have this certainty *through* something else, viz. the thing; and it, similarly, is in sense-certainty *through* something else, viz. through the 'I'" (*PhG*: 80, *PhS*: 59). Consciousness takes one of its aspects, the object, to be essential and the other, the subject, "unessential", so that it can measure the one against the other. The object, as the essential element of consciousness, serves as the criterion by means of which consciousness measures its knowledge (its subjective aspect). The object of sense-consciousness is simply a 'This' in the form of 'Now' and 'Here'. But, when one tries to define this 'Now', it turns out that the content does not remain the same but constantly changes. When it is written down, the 'Now' is night; later it becomes noon. Therefore, the 'Now' does not have a definite content but is "a *universal*" (*PhG*: 80–82, *PhS*: 59–60). Likewise, the 'Here' continuously changes; 'Here' refers to a tree, but one turns around and the 'Here' is a house instead. It, too, therefore, is a universal (*PhG*: 82, *PhS*: 60–61).

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18 I have adopted the practice of putting the phenomenological we in inverted commas.

19 This is what Loewenberg terms "histrionic impersonation" (1965: 17, 26).

By engaging in the foregoing self-examination, sense-consciousness comes to realize that its criterion (i.e. the object) does not correspond to its conception of what knowledge is (viz. knowledge of a particular). As a result, it now comes to regard its other aspect, the subject, as its essential and the object as its unessential element; thus the knowing subject becomes the criterion by which consciousness measures the validity of the object of knowledge. The philosopher (Hegel and the readers who follow his phenomenological exposition) observes that the original cognitive interrelation of subject and object has been reversed (*PhG*: 82–83, *PhS*: 61); that is to say, consciousness has experienced a reversal. This dialectical movement that consciousness has just undergone constitutes an *immanent critique*; for, although it is the phenomenological observers who can see consciousness's shift from its one aspect to the other (i.e. its reversal), in actual fact, it is sense-consciousness itself that has exercised this reversal on itself; it shifted to its other aspect (the subject) when its first criterion (the object) proved to be inadequate. So consciousness has provided a criterion from within itself and its reversal amounts to an immanent critique because no external criteria or standards had to be imported. Consciousness's self-examination consists in self-criticism. From the point of view of the philosopher, the foregoing experience of sense-consciousness (its reversal) is a *determinate negation*; for, out of consciousness's negation of the first object there emerges another object. Thus, the result of the negation of the first object is not purely negative.

Its subjective aspect now being the criterion whereby sense-consciousness tests the truth of the object of knowledge, "Its truth is in the object as *my* object, or in its being *mine* [*Meinen*]; it is because *I* know it" (*PhG*: 83, *PhS*: 61). This means that:

> The force of its truth thus lies now in the 'I', in the immediacy of my *seeing*, *hearing*, and so on; the vanishing of the single Now and Here that we mean is prevented by the fact that *I* hold them fast. 'Now' is day because I see it; 'Here' is a tree for the same reason. (*PhG*: 83, *PhS*: 61)

However, the subject turns out not to be an adequate criterion either; the pronoun 'I' does not individuate any particular subject:

> I, *this* 'I', see the tree and assert that 'Here' is a tree; but another 'I' sees the house and maintains that 'Here' is not a tree but a house instead. (*PhG*: 83, *PhS*: 61)

Thus, the criterion (i.e. the 'I') that sense-consciousness has posed does not correspond (is not adequate) to its object (i.e. the house, tree. etc.). From the standpoint of the philosopher, sense-consciousness experiences a dialectic (a reversal) once more. The lesson from consciousness's two experiences is that

language is unable to refer to particulars; it always refers to universals.[20] Therefore, sense-certainty never manages to say what it means to say.[21]

Through experience sense-certainty comes to learn that its essence does not lie in one of its aspects (either the object or the subject) only and that its immediacy is not an immediacy of any one of them taken severally. And 'we', the phenomenological observers, "have to posit the *whole* of sense-certainty itself as its *essence*, and no longer only one of its moments …" (*PhG*: 84, *PhS*: 62).[22] Taking its structure to be essential, consciousness at the level of sense-certainty focuses on the (inter)relation that obtains between its subjective and objective aspects; so it is a matter of indifference to it whether this or another 'I' would apprehend another object at a different time or should it turn around (*PhG*: 84, *PhS*: 62–63). The role of the phenomenological observer(s) is to speak for or, rather, to point out on the part of sense-certainty. This does not mean that the philosopher intervenes in the experience of consciousness; all it means is that he adopts the standpoint of sense-certainty. Accordingly, the philosopher (the phenomenological 'we') points to "the Now" that sense-certainty asserts. However, this "Now" vanishes the very moment 'we' point to it (*PhG*: 85, *PhS*: 63): "With his characteristic tendency to pun Hegel looks for the *Wesen* [essence] of the present in being *gewesen* [have been]" (Loewenberg 1965: 35).[23] Once more, then, sense-certainty deceives itself that it grasps particulars when it can grasp only universals. The "Now" turns out to be many "Nows", as it dissolves into the hours of the day, the minutes of the hour and so on. Likewise, the "Here" that is pointed out becomes "a Before and Behind, an Above and Below, a Right and Left". The single "Here" cannot be pinpointed; rather, it dissolves into "the universal Here", which is but "a simple plurality of Heres". Therefore, it becomes evident that sense-certainty is a movement, in the course of which it comes to criticize its form of knowledge by means of a criterion drawn from within itself. Therein lies phenomenological criticism, which takes the form of an *immanent critique*. Nevertheless, sense-consciousness forgets the

20 "… language … is the more truthful; in it, we ourselves directly refute what we *mean* to say [unsere *Meinung*], and since the universal is the true [content] of sense-certainty and language expresses this true [content] alone, it is just not possible for us ever to say, or express in words, a sensuous being that we *mean* [*meinen*]". *PhG*: 82, *PhS*: 60; and "… I can no more say what I *mean* in the case of 'I' than I can in the case of 'Now' and 'Here' … when I say 'I', this singular 'I', I say in general all 'Is'; everyone is what I say, everyone is 'I', this singular 'I'". *PhG*: 83–84, *PhS*: 62.

21 Here Hegel puns on "*meinen*" (mine) and "*meinen*" (to mean); in saying "mine" ("*meinen*"), sense-consciousness fails to say what it *means* (inf. "*meinen*"). See e.g.: "Its truth is in the object as *my* [*meinem*] object, or in its being *mein* [*Meinen*] …"*PhG*: 83, *PhS*: 61 (also quoted in the text above).

22 For a view that this is an instance of intervention by the 'we' in the development of consciousness see Caro 1997. However, as my reading of the experience of sense-certainty will make clear, I tend to disagree with Caro.

23 The square brackets are mine. Loewenberg is referring to "But what essentially *has been* [*gewesen ist*] is, in fact, not an essence that *is* [*kein Wesen*] … ". *PhG*: 85, *PhS*: 63.

movement that it exercises on itself (its experience) and starts from the beginning once more (*PhG*: 85–87, *PhS*: 64). By contrast, the philosopher (Hegel and the readers who follow his phenomenological account) remembers.[24] For this reason he is able to raise the experience of consciousness "into a scientific progression" (*PhG*: 74, *PhS*: 55). The philosopher sees that the "truth" of sense-certainty is, in point of fact, "a universal"; in taking (*nehmen*) what is true (*wahr*), consciousness learns to "*perceive*" (*wahrnehmen*) (*PhG*: 89, *PhS*: 66).[25] The next form of consciousness, "perception", emerges out of the inadequacies of "sense-certainty"; so, as soon as "sense-certainty" proves to be an inadequate form of understanding, a new form of consciousness arises out of it (a *determinate negation*). "Perception" appears as an improvement on the shape of consciousness that has preceded. And, when it too fails to live up to its own standards, there emerges another form out of it, namely, the "understanding". In "sense-certainty", "perception" and the "understanding" the object of knowledge appears to the subject to be something other, external to itself.

By the end of consciousness's experiences thus far the phenomenological observers are able to see that the object and the knowledge of it are within consciousness itself as its objective and subjective aspects respectively. At the same time, consciousness itself has come to *experience* the inadequacy of its understanding of the world (*Weltanschauung*); what it has hitherto considered to be an "*in-itself* turns out to be a mode in which the object is only for an other" (*PhG*: 133, *PhS*: 104). As "*self*-certainty", consciousness attempts to *re*-conceptualize its relationship to the world. To begin with, it comes forth as "desire"; this is the drive of self-certainty to negate the "other" in order to find itself in that other. But "self-certainty" as "desire" fails to live up to its expectations; it cannot reach self-satisfaction by simply consuming objects, for, as soon as it consumes one object, a new desire is awakened and this process goes on *ad infinitum*. To the philosopher (Hegel and his readers) it becomes apparent that, in fact, "*Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness*" (*PhG*: 139, *PhS*: 110), and "With this, we already have before us the Notion of Spirit [*Begriff des Geistes*]", defined as "'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'" (*PhG*: 140, *PhS*: 110). Now the knowing subject is self-consciousness and the object is another self-consciousness (in the relationship of mastery and slavery, stoicism, scepticism and the unhappy consciousness). In the course of its experience self-consciousness reaches a stage at which it appears extremely divided ("*entzweite*", *PhG*: 158) within itself, as it distinguishes between its unchangeable (essential) and changeable (inessential) aspects. Its deplorable plight consists in the fact that, in identifying itself with what is changeable or variable, this self-consciousness yearns for a unity with the unchangeable, which it considers to be its 'true' essence but which seems to lie beyond itself (*PhG*: 159, *PhS*: 126–127). Beset by a series

24 "And what consciousness will learn from experience in all sense-certainty is, in truth, only what we have seen …" *PhG*: 87, *PhS*: 65.

25 Hegel is punning on the etymology of "*wahrnehmen*" ("to perceive").

of contradictions, the "unhappy consciousness" dies out, while out of it emerges another form of understanding, namely, "Reason".

From the standpoint of the philosopher, the principle implicit in this form of understanding is that "its hitherto negative relation to otherness turns around into a positive relation" (*PhG*: 175–176, *PhS*: 139); that is, self-consciousness is now certain that it is all reality (idealism). This belief is also implicit in the observational study of nature (*PhG*: 183–221, *PhS*: 145–180). However, "observing Reason" turns out to be an inadequate understanding of reality, since it can lead to such ludicrous conclusions as that the essence of the self is the skull (*PhG*: 240 ff, *PhS*: 197 ff). As a result, "Reason" ceases to attempt to *find* itself in objects and seeks to *impose* itself *on* the objects it encounters through action. However, all the attempts by the hedonist, the romantic and the quixotic self-consciousness to reconcile themselves with the universality of society fail, as each one of them successively seeks to impose his or her own standards on the community (*PhG*: 255–282, *PhS*: 211–235). In "the spiritual animal kingdom" which emerges out of these abortive attempts, each individual gets involved with a task ("*Sache*") which he pursues, seemingly indifferent to what other members of the community think of himself (*PhG*: 285–301, *PhS*: 237–252). For the phenomenological observers, it is apparent that this stance "is not as honest as it seems"; "… just because he is concerned merely with being active and busy, he is not really in earnest about it …" (*PhG*: 297, *PhS*: 248–249). The individual may well appear to be disinterestedly fulfilling some "matter in hand", but actually this task is important to him only to the extent that it is done by himself and not by others. Moreover, the frustration of the others can only bring to light the principle that is implicit in the pursuit of *their* task; in pursuing it, they are not really interested in the "matter in hand" but in showing off (*PhG*: 298–300, *PhS*: 250–251). From the standpoint of the philosopher, this society is one where everyone is involved in deceiving everyone else. When this becomes apparent to the individuals themselves, they attempt to improve the situation by making rules of what is the right thing to do; for example, "Everyone ought to speak the truth" or "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (*PhG*: 301–306 [first rule p. 303, second rule p. 304], *PhS*: 252–256 [first rule p. 254, second rule p. 255]). Nevertheless, this attempt ends up in failure because, not only do "such laws stop short at Ought", thereby having "no actuality", commandments such as these cannot be as universal as they claim to be (*PhG*: 305, *PhS*: 256). The Kantian 'categorical imperative' appears as an improvement on the previous rules, since it is able to test whether specific laws are universalizable. Yet it turns out that everything can pass the universalizability test in so far as it is formally self-consistent. Therefore, "reason as testing laws" fails too (*PhG*: 306–310, *PhS*: 256–260).

"Spirit", which appears as a more adequate form of understanding, is characterized by a universality which is as much particular and substantive as universal; this is not a mere set of principles or formulae but an "ethical *substance*" ("*sittliche Substanz*") (*PhG*: 314, *PhS*: 263). "Spirit" is morality as *concretized* in human institutions and custom. From the standpoint of the philosopher, all previous "shapes" are "abstract forms" of "Spirit" and "result from Spirit analyzing

itself" and "distinguishing its moments". Yet the "moments" (the foregoing forms of understanding) *presuppose* spirit, which sustains them (*PhG*: 314, *PhS*: 264). However, although spirit is a more comprehensive world-view than the previous "shapes", it initially appears in an *im*mediate, *un*reflective manner. Thus, it needs to develop in order to attain self-knowledge. The "shapes" through which spirit passes in the course of its development differ from the previous ones in that they are not merely "shapes of consciousness" but "shapes of a world" (forms of life) (*PhG*: 315, *PhS*: 265). The "ethical order" of ancient Greece is characterized by an apparent harmony, in so far as each member of the *polis* by nature identifies with either the "human" (man) or "divine" (woman) law. Nevertheless, this happy state of affairs is pregnant with a fundamental contradiction (rupture); for man and woman are not passive and, as soon as they proceed to action, a tragic conflict comes to the fore (*PhG*: 317–342, *PhS*: 266–289). When this form of life crumbles, there emerges the *pax Romana*, where individuals enjoy formal equality; that is, they are all *persons* and have *legal* rights. The relationship between the individual citizens as well as between the citizens and the Emperor is a negative one. Because of their failure to identify with the state, the citizens come to view the Emperor as hostile to their interests, particularly their independence. But, by intervening in the economic activity of individuals, the Emperor destroys it and, eventually, comes to experience his own downfall (*PhG*: 342–346, *PhS*: 290–294). The phenomenological observers can see that the world which the legal person regarded as external to himself is actually the product of his activity. The form of life that Hegel terms "Culture" ("*Bildung*") is characterized by "self-consciousness's *own* externalization [*Entäußerung*] and separation from its essence [*Entwesung*]" (*PhG*: 347, *PhS*: 294).[26] In externalizing himself the individual creates the institutions of society and the state; but, at the same time, the individual's personality is moulded by those institutions. The individual conceives of his relationship to political society in terms of fixed judgements of what is "*good*" or "*bad*"; however, it turns out that "good" and "bad" are not fixed but pass over into their opposite. This means that political society is in total disintegration and values have lost their meaning, a situation best expressed in the language of the "disrupted consciousness". In the inner life of those who live in this "self-alienated spirit" the divided values appear in the form of "pure insight" and "faith". However, both are equally right and wrong, since their world-views are equally one-sided (*PhG*: 376–383 and 383–407, *PhS*: 321–328 and 328–349). Enlightenment (which develops out of "pure insight") internalizes the struggle it has experienced with "faith" in the form of a struggle between deism and materialism (*PhG*: 407 ff, *PhS*: 349 ff). Ultimately, Enlightenment proves inadequate as a *Weltanschauung*, because it is unable to unite its two expressions into a differentiating unity. Seeing its essence as lying in this differentiation, it contents itself with an endless movement between deism and materialism which finds its object in "utility", namely, the idea that only what is useful to human ends deserves humans' attention (*PhG*: 411 ff, *PhS*: 353 ff).

26 For this form of life see *PhG*: 347–424, *PhS*: 294–363.

Gradually, humans cease to see objective reality or a "supersensible world" beyond themselves and come to realize that the world is their own will, which is a "general will". This "general will", however, and the "absolute freedom" which it enjoys are so abstract that cannot lead to anything positive but can only result in the excesses of the French Revolution (*PhG*: 414–422, *PhS*: 355–363). Thus "absolute freedom" is necessarily led to abandon its "self-destroying reality" in order to "pass over into another land of self-conscious Spirit" (*PhG*: 422, *PhS*: 363). The "moral view of the world" in turn, as expressed in Kant's ethics, "collapses internally" (*PhG*: 443, *PhS*: 382).[27] In the ethical stance that emerges out of the collapse of the moral *Weltanschauung*, "Conscience", the individual no longer separates external reality from her thoughts thereof but proceeds to action certain that what she does is correct. Now it is the conscientious agent herself who confers meaning on her action; thus any action is moral inasmuch as it is the expression of the actor's conviction(s). As such, it must be recognized by the others. However, the others do not necessarily confer the same meaning on the action as the agent herself. Moreover, the agent may change her conviction(s); as a result, the others regard her as "evil" and dishonest so far as her motives are concerned. The actor may well try to express her inner intentions in language, but, as her convictions have no stable meaning, they are mere abstractions even for herself. Therefore, the actor withdraws into herself; she becomes a "beautiful soul". The "beautiful soul" cannot survive in society, as she refuses to act. But, when she does act, she is criticized by others. From the point of view of the philosopher (Hegel and his readers), those who accuse the actor of personal motives are unjustified, for they are judging on the basis of their *own* standards. So they have to accept the actor's confession and forgive her. Eventually, individuals come to realize that they all share a common set of values and that mistakes can certainly be made, actions may well be prompted by personal motives and interests, yet it is always possible to recognize these partial standpoints as valid and thereby forgive individual actors, because the universal standpoint is constantly in the making, the result of an ongoing negotiation of equally one-sided perspectives. In this way they implicitly experience the existence of God between them (*PhG*: 445–472, *PhS*: 383–409).

In the "shapes" of "Consciousness", "Self-consciousness", "Reason" and "Spirit" religion appears as an aspect of them. However, in the aforesaid "shapes" humans fail to grasp the "truth" implicit in their conception of the "absolute Being", to wit, that the latter is their reflection on themselves ("the self-consciousness of Spirit") (*PhG*: 473, *PhS*: 410). Religion, as self-conscious spirit, appears after the above "shapes" "have run their full course" (*PhG*: 476, *PhS*: 413). Nevertheless, religion too, initially appears in its "*immediacy*" and in its as yet undeveloped form. It, therefore, has to develop; it develops from "Natural Religion" through the "Religion of Art" to the "Revealed Religion" (*PhG*: 481–548, *PhS*: 416–478). In the "Revealed Religion" the community comes to grasp its essence, but the community's self-understanding is tainted by the form of its knowledge,

27 For the moral world-view see *PhG*: 423–444, *PhS*: 364–383.

which is still that of "picture-thought" ("*Vorstellung*") (*PhG*: 480, *PhS*: 416); the community's awareness of itself in its social institutions and practices (the institutions and practices *it* has produced) does not constitute the subject-matter of its reflection of itself. The "*content*" of religion is implicitly "absolute Spirit", namely, the community's self-awareness in its institutions and practices. But, in the "Revealed Religion" this "content" still lies dormant (*PhG*: 549, *PhS*: 479). For this reason religion proves to be, even in its developed form, an inadequate form of self-knowledge.

"Absolute knowing", as this is propounded in the final chapter of the *Phenomenology*, is not a positive doctrine;[28] rather, it is the recognition that all attempts on the part of humans to comprehend reality in terms of the 'correspondence theory of truth' have failed. In its attempt to make its subjective and objective aspects correspond, human consciousness repeatedly shifts from one to the other. This is not mere repetition however, for in the course of the phenomenological account both the subject and the object become more comprehensive; and each form of understanding or world-view ("Consciousness", "Self-consciousness", "Reason", "Spirit" and "Religion") is more adequate than the one preceding it. This implies that the phenomenological development is not simply linear but circular as well; human comprehension is one of concentric circles, each circle including the previous one. This is what Hegel means when he says that the "True" "is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning" (*PhG*: 20, *PhS*: 10).[29] Yet each one of the forms of understanding and life in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* proves to be inadequate on its own terms. So the importance of Hegelian 'phenomenology' as an *immanent critique* is that it is an introduction to philosophical science in a negative sense;[30] it tells us what philosophical science is *not*. It is in this way that it prepares us for science proper, namely, Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

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28 It is a know*ing* (*Wissen*), not know*ledge* (*Kenntnis*). This seems to suggest that it is an approach or stance to reality, an outlook, rather than some metaphysical truth about it (viz. a truth independent of reality itself).

29 Cf. "The movement is the circle that returns into itself, the circle that presupposes its beginning and reaches it only at the end". *PhG*: 559, *PhS*: 488.

30 On this I agree with Maker (1994). According to Maker, the purpose of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is to overcome the "structure of consciousness"; on the "structure of consciousness" see Maker (1994: 71–74, 76, 78, 81, 89–93, 95, 102–106, 109–110, 114, 129).

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Chapter 3
Foucault's Genealogy[1]

What is 'Genealogy'?

A simple definition of Foucauldian genealogy would be that it is a type of *history*. However, it is a *specific* type of history.[2] Foucault's genealogical history seeks to deconstruct what was previously regarded as unified (i.e. history as a chronological pattern of events emanating from a mystified but all-determining point of departure), while also attempting to identify an underlying continuity which is the product of "discontinuous systematicities" (Foucault 1981: 69). Moreover, in contrast to the Hegelian and Marxist philosophies of history, 'genealogy' is *not* an *holistic* project but a *perspectival* enterprise. Foucauldian genealogy is an history of tracing 'origins' and, as such, it questions the idea of origins or deeper meanings. It unearths the *force relations* operating in particular events and historical developments. Foucault describes his genealogy as an "effective history" (1984: 87–90). Foucauldian genealogy debunks the assumption underlying conventional historiography that there are 'facts' to be interpreted; rather, facts are themselves constructed out of the researcher's "will to truth".[3] Furthermore, Foucauldian genealogy shows how 'subjects' are constituted in discourses (Foucault 1975, 1976, 1991, 1998). This chapter will discuss what Foucauldian genealogy consists in. It will also discuss Foucault's "analytics"[4] of power and the extent to which genealogy is a *critique*.

Foucault describes genealogy using one of Nietzsche's well-known metaphors. Genealogy is "gray", its task being to *decipher* the hieroglyphic script of humans' past, a past that is neither black (i.e. totally unknown) nor white (i.e. transparent), but something in between (gray), that is, *ambiguous* and *uncertain*. Thus, a rigorous investigation is needed, if the meaning of the past is to be uncovered:

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1 This chapter draws on a paper that I presented at a meeting of the International Social Theory Consortium. See Sembou 2011.

2 Foucault says: "And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history". (1980: 117).

3 Foucault refers to the "will to truth" in *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1 (1998: 79).

4 Foucault insisted that he did not offer a "theory" but an "analytics" of power. See Foucault 1976: 109 / 1998: 82. See also Foucault 2000b: " … in studying these power relations, I in no way construct a theory of power". (451) For a view that Foucault's analyses of power constitute a "theory", albeit in a qualified sense, see Lynch 2011: 14–16.

"Genealogy, consequently, requires patience and a knowledge of details, and it depends on a vast accumulation of source material" (1984: 76–77). Due to its minuteness, genealogy may at first give us the impression that it deals with trivial, everyday things, rather than with important developments. However, genealogy acquires its character from recording "what we tend to feel is without history", instances such as "sentiments, love, conscience, instincts" (1984: 76).

Crucially, the writing of the human past by the genealogist is necessarily an *interpretation*, which itself is neither true nor false. For Foucault, the genealogist is an interpreter but *not* a hermeneutician.[5] The genealogist as *interpreter* recognizes that the meaning he/she gives to history is doubtful (hence "gray"), "acknowledges its system of injustice" (Foucault 1984: 90) and the fact that his/her interpretation is subject to revision. The genealogist-interpreter has a sense of where he/she stands in history and does not ignore the fact that he/she is the product of historic and social circumstances; however, *simultaneously* he/she is able to distance him-/herself from his/her situation in order to examine things from afar. In doing so, the genealogist-interpreter ignores the actors' own interpretation(s) of the meaning of their actions. Therefore, the genealogical approach is one of detachment. By contrast, the approach of the *hermeneutician* is one of engagement, as he/she attempts to grasp the significance of things from within them. As opposed to the interpreter-hermeneutician, the genealogist-interpreter "finds that the questions which are traditionally held to be the deepest and murkiest are truly and literally the most superficial". Thus, "their meaning is to be discovered in surface practices, not in mysterious depths" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 107). Accordingly, a genealogical interpretation is distinctly different from an hermeneutical approach.

The claim that interpretation is *not* the uncovering of a hidden meaning has revolutionary implications for philosophy; or better, it is a direct attack against philosophy as it traditionally has been understood. For Foucault's genealogy undermines the belief in the existence of unchanging essences and truths. When he realized that there are no primordial verities in the world, Foucault shifted his emphasis from his early studies on madness (1961/2006) to his work of the seventies and eighties. In his early work Foucault had pre-supposed an *essence* of madness, namely, an original truth. But in his genealogical writings Foucault engaged in a *de*constructive exercise. Continuing Nietzsche's tradition of "philosophizing with the hammer" (Nietzsche 1992: 86), Foucault sought to destroy all the metaphysical ideas that have dominated Western philosophy since Plato.

Foucault was more conscious of genealogy as a *method* than Nietzsche (1994) was.[6] Therefore, he set forth its objectives. To begin with, Foucault was more

5 Cf. "Foucault is clearly not a hermeneuticist" (Dean 1994: 16).

6 F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. C. Diethe, ed. K. Ansell-Pearson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Mitchell Dean suggests that "Foucault's turn to Nietzsche is not for a model of a methodology to follow but for a kind of incitement that would force the conceptualization of the relation of historiography to its present outside the reified positivism of archaelogy" (1994: 19).

careful to define what genealogy as an history concerned with tracing origins meant. In examining Nietzsche's genealogy, Foucault noted that Nietzsche used "*Ursprung*", "*Entstehung*" and "*Herkunft*" interchangeably. Foucault argues that the problem of the term "*Ursprung*" is that it refers to "something that was already there" – viz. a deeper reality – before the search began.

> However, if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is "something altogether different" behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms. (Foucault 1984: 78)

In other words, for Foucault, the idea of the "origin" is just a metaphysical truth that has dominated European thought for two thousand years. In Nietzschean terms, genealogy questions the "will to truth": "… devotion to truth and the precision of scientific methods arose from the passion of scholars, their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical and ending discussions, and their spirit of competition – the personal conflicts that slowly forged the weapons of reason" (Foucault 1984: 78).

According to Foucault, "*Herkunft*" and "*Entstehung*" characterize the task of genealogy better.

> *Herkunft* is the equivalent of stock or *descent*; it is the ancient affiliation to a group, sustained by the bonds of blood, tradition, or social class. The analysis of *Herkunft* often involves a consideration of race or social type. But the traits it attempts to identify are not the exclusive generic characteristics of an individual, a sentiment, or an idea, which permit us to qualify them as "Greek" or "English"; rather, it seeks the subtle, singular, and subindividual marks that might possibly intersect in them to form a network that is difficult to unravel. (1984: 80–81)

Genealogy engages in deconstruction, for the analysis of "*Herkunft*" fragments what was considered unified; it does not merely challenge the linear conception of history but also identifies an underlying continuity, which is the product of "the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us" (Foucault 1984: 81). As Foucault says, genealogy elaborates "a theory of discontinuous systematicities" (1981: 69). However, although these discontinuous series have their regularity, there are no links of mechanical causality or of ideal necessity between the elements that constitute them. Hence the significance of chance, accident or *aléa*.

"*Entstehung*", on the other hand, denotes *emergence*, that is, "the moment of arising". So it is different from "origin" in the usual sense of the word; for "origin" usually has metaphysical connotations, as it implies an as yet unknown purpose that seeks its realization the moment it arises. However, genealogy does not seek to uncover substantial entities; rather, it studies the emergence of a battle which

defines and clears a space (Foucault 1984: 83–84). Instead of origins or deeper meanings, Foucault the genealogist finds *force relations* operating in particular events[7] and historical developments. This is where Foucault's genealogical analysis is reminiscent of Nietzsche's. There is an important difference, however; whereas Nietzsche grounds morality as well as social and political institutions in the tactics ("will to power") of individual actors or groups of actors, Foucault sees social and political practices as the result of strategies without strategists: "… no one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the *interstice*" (1984: 85).[8] Foucault's use of the term "interstice" should be emphasized; the play of forces at a particular historical context is conditioned – to some extent – by the space which defines them. For Foucault, human actors do not first exist and then enter into combat or harmony; rather, they emerge on a field of battle. Subjects are caught in networks of power – what Foucault calls "meticulous rituals of power" ("dispositifs", 1976: 99 and 1980: 138) – that lie beyond their control. These "rituals of power" are neither the conscious creation of actors nor simply a set of relationships; nor are they located in specific places; nor is it easy to identify the moment of their emergence. It is the task of Foucault's genealogy to identify and analyze these "meticulous rituals of power".

In *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* Foucault isolates specific sites (*not* places) of "rituals of power", namely, Bentham's Panopticon and the confessional (1991: 200–209 and 1998: 61–61, respectively).[9] As genealogist, Foucault then tries to specify how power works, when, how, and what its effects are. The rules that emerge from "rituals of power" are passed into civil law or moral conventions, which – supposedly – prevent the violence that would otherwise ensue. But, as a genealogical analysis demonstrates, these rules and conventions only perpetuate power and facilitate its diffusion within the body politic as a whole (Foucault 1984: 85). According to Foucault, "Power is war, the continuation of war by other means" (2004: 15). He inverts Clausewitz's dictum that "*War is a mere continuation of policy by other means*" (1982: 119), arguing instead that "politics is the continuation of war by other means" (Foucault 2004: 15).[10]

Genealogy searches "for instances of discursive production (which also administer silences, to be sure), of the production of power (which sometimes

7 For the idea of "eventalization" see "Questions of Method", in Foucault 2002b: 226–229.

8 My italics.

9 On Bentham's Panopticon see also "The Eye of Power", in Foucault 1980: 146–165.

10 For Foucault, this implies: First, that power relations "are essentially anchored in a certain relationship of force that was established in and through war at a given historical moment that can be historically specified" (2004: 15); second, political power constitutes a "silent war", as it reinscribes that relationship of force "in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals"; third, " … the last battle would put an end to politics … would at last … suspend the exercise of power as continuous warfare" (2004: 16).

have the function of prohibiting), of the propagation of knowledge (which often cause mistaken beliefs or systematic misconceptions to circulate)". Genealogy writes "the history of these instances and their transformations" (1998: 12). So a genealogical history of sexuality unmasks the fact that since the end of the sixteenth century the "putting into discourse of sex" has been a technique of power exercised over sex, which has allowed the "dissemination and implantation of polymorphous sexualities". Further, "the will to knowledge has not come to a halt in the face of a taboo that must not be lifted, but has persisted in constituting – despite many mistakes, of course – a science of sexuality" (Foucault: 1998: 12–13).

Rules "are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose" (Foucault 1984: 86) – this is one of the most important lessons that Nietzsche has taught us. A traditional historical analysis of the 'purpose' of social and political institutions can*not* unearth their "*Entstehung*" because "The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them" (Foucault 1984: 86). Genealogy shows, therefore, that interpretations are dependent on specific configurations of power. And the more the genealogist-interpreter uncovers an interpretation the more she/he finds not a fixed meaning but only another interpretation. In this way the arbitrariness of all interpretation is revealed. Since there is no 'original' essence, there is nothing to interpret; and, if there is nothing to interpret, everything is open to interpretation. This is the insight we gain by practising genealogy.

One can challenge Foucault's genealogical method on the grounds that its findings are actually the presuppositions that make genealogy possible. Specifically, one can ask: Are such claims as "all that exists is interpretation" and "power, subjection, domination are everywhere" really the results of a genealogical survey? Or do they have ontological validity? If the latter, then there is a problem. To be sure, Foucault acknowledges that genealogy itself is perspectival (1984: 90). And it could be argued in favour of genealogy that, provided it recognizes its partiality (i.e. its interpretation), it is permissible that it sets forth its hypotheses. Having destroyed metaphysical beliefs and verities, Foucault looks at the play of wills. Indeed, it seems that Foucault treats force relations and the interpretations that arise therefrom as universal truths. In other words, from Foucault's perspective, the play of wills has ontological status. One can ask whether Foucault's hypothesis of the fluidity or 'play' of wills is better – viz. more valid – than other ontological claims. Is Foucault justified in thinking that his perspective is a more profound and accurate insight into life? However, one can say, in support of Foucault, that the hypothesis of the play of wills and the fluidity of interpretations is 'thin', compared to other more substantial ontological claims (i.e. God exists).[11]

11 Many years ago I discussed this issue with Kimberly Hutchings, to whom I am grateful for an exciting discussion. I have benefited immensely from this exchange.

I now turn to a consideration of *what type of history* genealogy is and how it differs from traditional history. Foucault says that genealogy is an "effective history" ("wirkliche Historie"). What are the main features of "effective history"? Firstly, "effective history" puts everything into motion; that is, it *relativizes* all ideals of truth, firmness and solidity. As Foucault puts it, "… it places within a process of development everything considered immortal in man" (1984: 87). We have noted above that genealogy attacks metaphysics; for Foucault, history "can evade metaphysics and become a privileged instrument of genealogy if it refuses the certainty of absolutes" (1984: 87). Secondly, having dispensed with metaphysics, genealogy as "effective history" eschews a supra-historical perspective. This is done by reversing the relationship between proximity and distance. Whereas traditional history examines the distant past, "Effective history studies what is closest, but in an abrupt dispossession, so as to seize it at a distance …" (Foucault 1984: 89). Also, genealogy recognizes its interested character (Foucault 1984: 90). Moreover, unlike traditional history which is past-oriented, genealogy is an "history of the present". Foucault says in *Discipline and Punish*:

> I would like to write the history of this prison, with all the political investments of the body that it gathers together in its closed architecture. Why? Simply because I am interested in the past? No, if one means by that writing a history of the past in terms of the present. Yes, if one means writing the history of the present. (1991: 30–31)

This "history of the present" is a "critical history", which is "an effective tool for historical sociologies" (Dean 1994: 21). Although Dean does not wish to make Foucault "into a sociologist in disguise", he reflects "on *his* historical sense and what it might offer the new historical sense in sociology" (1994: 12). For him, it is a moot point whether "adequate theoretical grounds for a 'marriage' of history and sociology can be adduced at all" (Dean 1994: 23).

What is wrong with "a history of the past in terms of the present"? According to Foucault, this is the "presentist fallacy"; the historian takes "a model or a concept, an institution, a feeling, or a symbol from his present" and attempts to "find that it had a parallel meaning in the past" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 118). Nor does a genealogical history attempt to discover the underlying laws of history, thereby falling in the trap of finalism. The latter holds that the present is the accomplishment of some latent goal in the past. Rather, a genealogical history begins with a *diagnosis of the present*. Dean says:

> The notion of a history of the present seeks to use our involvements and those of our contemporaries to *problematise* dimensions and regions of social existence and personal experience. It directs attention to potential positivities of analysis. (1994: 36)[12]

12 My italics.

The genealogist-historian locates the manifestations of a given "meticulous ritual of power" to see where it arose and how it developed. *Discipline and Punish* examines the "*Entstehung*" of the human sciences (which Foucault calls "pseudo-sciences") and their relation to the "*Entstehung*" of the prison. Foucault says:

> This book is intended as … a genealogy of the present scientifico-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules, from which it extends its effects and by which it masks its exorbitant singularity. (1991: 23)

A genealogical enquiry shows that "… power produces knowledge … that power and knowledge directly imply one another" (Foucault 1991: 27). What is the relationship between the prison and the human sciences? It seems that Foucault does not clearly differentiate between the two *Entstehungsgeschichten*, despite the fact that he did not wish to reduce the one to the other. Notice:

> *I am not saying that the human sciences emerged from the prison*. But, if they have been able to be formed and to produce so many profound changes in the episteme, it is because they have been conveyed by a specific and new modality of power: a certain policy of the body, a certain way of rendering the group of men docile and useful. (Foucault 1991: 305)[13]

Power-Knowledge

The connection that Foucault makes between "power" and "knowledge" is innovative. Foucault's use of a hyphen between these two terms is meant to show the constitutive (or productive) aspect of knowledge (Foucault 1980: 102). Power (relations) and knowledge (or truth) implicate each other (Foucault 1980: 93 and 131–133, 1991: 27–28, 1998: 60), hence Foucault's term "power-knowledge" (1991: 28) (« *pouvoir-savoir* », 1975: 32).

The meaning of the composite term "*pouvoir-savoir*" is more complex than the English translation "power-knowledge" would at first sight suggest. In French there are different words for different forms of knowledge. In his archaeological works Foucault used the word "*savoir*" to refer to the "implicit knowledge" characteristic of an historical epoch, that is, to the "common sense" of a people at that time at a specific place; he was concerned with how the "*savoir*" shaped the "explicit knowledge" – what he called "*connaissance*" – "that is institutionalized in the disciplines that make up the human sciences" (Feder 2011: 55).[14] Concerning "*pouvoir*", although it is translated as "power", one should not forget that in French

13 My italics.

14 Feder refers to Foucault 1972: 182–183.

it is also the infinitive form of the verb "to be able to", i.e. "can". Accordingly, as Ellen K. Feder (2011) says:

> In Foucault's work, *pouvoir* must be understood in this dual sense, as both "power" as English speakers generally take it (which could also be rendered as *puissance* or *force* in French), but also as a kind of potentiality, capability or capacity. Power, Foucault tells us, must be understood to be more complex than a term like *puissance* conveys; it has multiple forms and can issue from "anywhere". (55–56)

Additionally, it is difficult to translate the composite "power/knowledge". Gayatri Spivak draws our attention to the "homely verbiness of *savoir* in *savoir-faire* [a ready and polished kind of 'know-how', in English], *savoir-vivre* [an understanding of social life and customs] into *pouvoir*". So "*pouvoir-savoir*" could mean "being able to do something – only as you are able to make sense of it" (Spivak 1993: 34; quoted in Feder 2011: 56).

Foucault uses the composite term "power-knowledge" to refer to the relation between "power" and "knowledge" that genealogy unmasks. For example, a genealogical study shows that the explosion of discussion about sex in the Victorian age was due to a "type of power" that bourgeois society "brought to bear on the body and on sex" (Foucault 1998: 47). It, thus, casts doubt on the "repressive hypothesis" (Foucault 1998: 10). Genealogy demonstrates that "this power had neither the form of the law, nor the effects of the taboo"; rather, it operated by producing (different kinds of) sexuality and making it a defining characteristic of individuals (Foucault 1998: 47). Consequently, there emerged four "figures" who were simultaneously "objects of knowledge", namely, "the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple, and the perverse adult" (Foucault 1998: 105). These were products of four strategies which "formed specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex" (Foucault 1998: 103), to wit, the "hysterization of women's bodies", the "pedagogization of children's sex", the "socialization of procreative behavior" and the "psychiatrization of perverse pleasure", respectively (Foucault 1998: 104–105). So, far from being an historical fact, sexuality is "a historical construct" (Foucault 1998: 105) (« *un dispositif historique* », Foucault 1976: 139). Therefore, the real questions are whether prohibition and censorship are not forms of power rather than repression and whether all this discourse on sex is not itself part of the power it criticizes as "repression" (Foucault 1998: 10).[15] However, Foucault is clear that power and knowledge are not identical:

> … when I read – and I know it was being attributed to me – the thesis "Knowledge is power" or "Power is knowledge", I begin to laugh, since studying their *relation*

15 For his suspicion of the notion of 'repression' see also Foucault 2004: 17–18 and 40.

> is precisely my problem. If they were identical, I would not have to study them … . The very fact that I pose the question of their relation proves clearly that I do not *identify* them. (Foucault 2000b: 455)

Visker has pointed out the problematic nature of Foucault's genealogical project (1995: 57 ff). He argues that "If the connection between knowledge and power … is really attempting to express a condition of the possibility of knowledge and science in general, then the critique of the human sciences cannot consist in accusing those sciences of a *liaison dangereuse* with power" (1995: 58). He then goes on to say that the hyphen between "power" and "knowledge" leads to a differentiation which ultimately breaks down the conjoining of the two terms. Visker identifies three attempts (on the part of Foucault) at differentiation. In the first attempt (what he calls "autre pouvoir, autre savoir") Foucault wishes to link a particular form of knowledge (viz. the human sciences) with a particular form of power. But in this way Foucault actually undermines the "power-knowledge" concept, since he seems to be saying that 'genuine' knowledge should break its link with power. For example:

> The great investigation that gave rise to the sciences of nature has become detached from its politico-juridical model; the examination, on the other hand, is still caught up in disciplinary technology. (Visker 1995: 62)[16]

In his second attempt at differentiation Foucault, Visker argues, bases his critique of the human sciences on the fact that their link with power has a specific character which is not present in the natural sciences. "And the difference [of the hyphen's nature] is even so great that the concepts of power and knowledge could be said to have a different meaning – effectively (in the case of power) or possibly (in that of knowledge) – in each case" (Visker 1995: 64). In his third attempt at differentiation Foucault identifies an internal connection between "power" and "knowledge"; in that case, the individual is a *product* of power, "a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called 'discipline'" (Visker 1995: 67).[17] Visker asks: "if one must speak of an internal connection [between "power" and "knowledge"], why should one then deny that the human sciences emerged from the prison?" (1995: 69).[18] Similarly, Visker says with regard to confession: *Either* confession entails a power relation, in which case the play of seducing and being seduced brings a specific subjectivity into being; *or* seduction is itself a kind of corruption whereby the person who confesses is affected (1995: 87). The foregoing considerations lead Visker to conclude that the nature of the "power-knowledge" concept undermines Foucault's genealogical project. In order to criticize the human sciences with regard to their application(s), Foucault must

16 Visker quotes from Foucault 1991: 227.
17 Visker quotes from Foucault 1991: 194.
18 He refers to Foucault 1991: 305.

stress the repressive aspect of power. However, this is against his intentions, since the purpose of his genealogical studies has been to emphasize the productivity of power. But, were Foucault to place the emphasis on the latter, then his genealogy would be deprived of all critical potential. In addition, (regarding punishment) "if power (also) represses, then there is an instance which is repressed and, in that repression, its *originality* is infringed. For Foucault, this instance is the body" (1995: 71).[19] Consequently, Foucault's genealogy confronts a problem that it should like to avoid; that is to say, it *assumes* – quite unwittingly – that there is a body prior to power. So Foucault falls back to pre-genealogical conceptions (Visker 1995: 69–73).

Genealogy as Critique

I will now turn to look at Foucault's conception of *critique*. What is the relation between 'critique' and 'genealogy'? In his inaugural address at the Collège de France Foucault said that the analyses he would make would fall into two "sets": first, "the 'critical' section" would examine "the forms of exclusion, of limitation, of appropriation" and would show "how they are formed, in response to what needs, how they have been modified and displaced, what constraint they have effectively exerted, to what extent they have been evaded" (1981: 70); and, second, "the genealogical aspect" would "concern the effective formation of discourse either within the limits of this control, or outside them, or more often on both sides of the boundary at once" (1981: 71). Foucault proceeds to say:

> In truth these two tasks are never completely separable … The regular formation of discourse can incorporate the procedures of control, in certain conditions and to a certain extent (that is what happens, for instance, when a discipline takes on the form and status of a scientific discourse); and conversely the figures of control can take shape within a discursive formation … The difference between the critical and the genealogical enterprise is not so much a difference of object or domain, but of point of attack, perspective and delimitation. (1981: 71–72)

Therefore, Foucault understood 'genealogy' and 'critique' as mutually complementary. In fact, critique is an integral part of genealogy; genealogy is a *critical* enterprise.[20]

Importantly, for Foucault, "A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are". Rather, "It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged modes of thought the practices

19 My italics.

20 For a discussion of three forms of critique as well as the sense in which Foucault's genealogy is a critique see Guess 2002.

that we accept rest" (1990: 154).[21] The starting-point of critique is a "principle of reversal" (Foucault 1981: 67, 70); that is to say, critique turns our deep-seated conceptions upside-down. The task of Foucault's genealogy is to offer us a different *interpretation*, to make a different *perspective* known, in order to allow for the possibility of our becoming otherwise than we are. Foucault says:

> My general project over the past few years has been, in essence, to reverse the mode of analysis followed by the entire discourse of right from the time of the Middle Ages. My aim, therefore, was to invert it, to give due weight, that is, to the fact of domination, to expose both its latent nature and its brutality. (1980: 95)

Following a reversal of the traditional conception of 'power', a genealogical analysis, rather than concerning itself with "the regulated and legitimate forms of power" (legal conception of power), locates power at the extreme points of its exercise, i.e. as it "invests itself in institutions" and "becomes embodied in techniques"; rather than treating power "at the level of conscious intention or decision", examines the point where it is invested – consciously or unconsciously – in institutions and practices; rather than seeing power as a possession, it studies power as a network; rather than deducing power starting from the top of the social pyramid in order to discover the extent to which it permeates the base ("descending" analysis of power), it conducts an "*ascending* analysis of power" by starting from its "infinitesimal mechanisms"; rather than considering power to be repressive or "ideological", it views it as productive (Foucault 1980: 96–102).[22]

Foucault argued that, in order for *criticism* to be able to show that "things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such", it has to be "*radical*", viz. to operate *without* the mode of thought concerned (hence the "principle of reversal"). More significantly, it cannot be a matter "of there being a time for criticism and a time for transformation, nor people who do the criticism and others who do the transforming"; rather, "the work of deep transformation can only be carried out in a free atmosphere, one constantly agitated by a *permanent criticism*" (1990: 155).[23] The task of genealogy as critique is to isolate the constraints *immanent* in a particular society and the possibilities of transformation (given those constraints or impediments); according to Foucault, "the important question" is "whether the system of constraints in which a society functions leaves individuals the liberty to transform the system" (1990: 294). Having identified the practices that restrain us, we will be able to resist them in order to *create* ourselves in our autonomy.[24] So

21 See also "So Is It Important to Think?" in Foucault 2002b: 454–458. This interview was published in *Libération* under the title « Est-il Donc Important de Penser? » on 30–31 May 1981.

22 Cf. Foucault 2004: 27–34. See also Foucault 1998: 94–96.

23 My italics.

24 Foucault owes this idea to Nietzsche.

it is important to note that, for Foucault, power presupposes resistance and vice versa (1980: 142; 1998: 95–96; 1982: 211–212, 221–222, 225–226; 2002b: 329–331, 340, 342, 346–348). And, as a commentator has said, "it is the *exercise* of resistance to power which is the form of freedom" (Owen 1994: 161). Therefore:

> resistance is the condition of possibility of genealogy. As such there is an immanent relationship between genealogy and resistance which expresses itself both in the *idea* of genealogy in so far as a concern with showing how we have become what we are is predicated on the possibility of being otherwise than we are and in the *practice* of genealogy as an investigation of how we can be otherwise than we are. (Owen 1994: 162)

Some commentators, most famously, Jürgen Habermas (1994a: IX and X) and Nancy Fraser (1981 and 1989), have criticized Foucault's genealogy on the grounds that it is unable to provide reasons why we should want to be otherwise than we are, i.e. to transform our practices.[25] It has been argued that analyses that merely point to the possibility of change without at the same time laying down a plan for change are simply evidence of the "young conservative" stance of some intellectuals (Fraser 1994). However, these critics have misunderstood the nature and the objectives of Foucault's critical-genealogical project.[26] For Foucault rejects the idea of a normative foundation of resistance, precisely because he associates it with the role of "the 'left' intellectual" (usually of the Marxist tradition) who supposedly is "master of truth and justice" and in this capacity prescribes to others what they have to do (1980: 126). However, Foucault says:

> To say to oneself at the outset: what reform will I be able to carry out? That is not, I believe, an aim for the intellectual. His role, since he works specifically in the realm of thought, is to see how far the liberation of thought can make those

25 Some critics have gone further, arguing that Foucault does make normative claims, although he does not acknowledge this. See, among others, Taylor 1984. In the Foucault/Habermas debate this charge is referred to as "crypto-normativity"; see Habermas 1994b: 94–98.

26 For why thinkers working within the tradition of the Frankfurt School of Sociology have misunderstood genealogy see Owen 2002. Briefly: "Critical Theory as *ideologiekritik* is directed to freeing us from captivity to an ideology", whereas "genealogy is directed to freeing us from captivity to a picture or perspective" (216). Owen responds to Habermas and Fraser (224–226), and suggests that "precisely insofar as these writers are working from within the tradition of Critical Theory, their focus generates a blindspot concerning the issue of aspectival captivity which genealogy addresses" (226). For a discussion of Foucault's and Habermas's projects see Owen 1996. For the Foucault/Habermas debate see Ashenden and Owen 1999 as well as Owen (2014: 157–245). For some objections to Foucault's genealogical accounts and responses thereto see also Heyes 2011: 167–169.

> transformations urgent enough for people to want to carry them out and difficult enough to carry out for them to be profoundly rooted in reality. (1990: 155)[27]

So, according to Foucault, the intellectual ought to abandon the role of *the* leader. On the contrary, he/she ought to confine him-/herself to a critique formulated by way of an historical analysis, whose aim would be to demonstrate that many postulates, *évidences*, institutions and ideas we take for granted are historical constructs, and that "we are much more recent than we think" (1990: 156). As Raymond Guess (2002) has said:

> In contemporary philosophical discussion the concept of normativity (along with the now almost automatically raised question concerning the 'normative implications' of every theoretical proposal) is surely the most important 'self-evident' notion that must be put into question. Foucault's work can be interpreted as an initial contribution to a *genealogy of normativity*, and his writings will remain highly relevant until such time as the task is fulfilled. (213)[28]

For Foucault, the theoretical and political function of genealogy is to contribute important elements to the perception of things; if people want to, they can then use those elements in order to make their *own* political choices. Like Nietzsche, Foucault refused to legislate for others. Similarly, like Nietzsche, Foucault wished to use genealogy as an argument against *particular* possibilities that had become realities. Foucault followed Nietzsche in carrying out a *performative* model of *critique*.[29] Crucially, Foucault contrasted the "universal" to the "specific" intellectual. Whereas the former is concerned with positing universal norms (the model of *the* leader), the latter offers specific analyses and engages in "local" criticism and/or struggle (1980: 132).[30] By practising "local" criticism, genealogy allows "an *insurrection of subjugated knowledges*" (Foucault 1980: 81). By "subjugated knowledges" Foucault means two things; first, "historical contents" or "historical knowledges" that "have been buried or masked" by "functional arrangements or systematic organizations" and, second, "a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated

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27 Cf. "The role of an intellectual is not to tell others what they have to do. By what right would he do so? … it is, through the analyses that he carries out in his own field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits … to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, to reexamine rules and institutions and on the basis of this re-problematization … to participate in the formation of a political will … " (Foucault 1990: 265).

28 My italics for emphasis.

29 See Owen 1994: 210–213 and 1995 for the idea that Foucauldian genealogy performs an "exemplary critique".

30 On the "*local* character of criticism" see also Foucault 1980: 81. Instances of local critique include the anti-psychiatric movement, challenges to morality and sexual ethics, as well as protests against the judiciary and the penal system (Foucault 2004: 5–6).

knowledges: naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity" (2004: 7). Genealogy consists in

> a way of playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges off against the unitary theoretical instance that claims to be able to filter them, organize them into a hierarchy, organize them in the name of a true body of knowledge, in the name of the rights of a science that is in the hands of a few. (Foucault 2004: 9)

For this reason Foucault famously insisted that genealogies are "antisciences" (2004: 9).

Conclusion

In an interview Foucault said: "In this piece of research on the prisons, as in my other earlier work, the target of analysis wasn't 'institutions', 'theories', or 'ideology' but *practices*". The "hypothesis" was that "these types of practice are not just governed by institutions, prescribed by ideologies, guided by pragmatic circumstances – whatever role these elements may actually play – but, up to a point, possess their own specific regularities, logic, strategy, self-evidence, and 'reason'." And the goal ("the aim") was to grasp "the conditions that make these acceptable at a given moment".

> So I was aiming to write a history not of the prison as an institution, but of the *practice of imprisonment*: to show its origin or, more exactly, to show how this way of doing things … was capable of being accepted at a certain moment as a principal component of the penal system, thus coming to seem an altogether natural, self-evident, and indispensable part of it.

Therefore, "It is a question of analyzing a 'regime of practices' – practices being understood as places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken-for-granted meet and interconnect" (Foucault 2002b: 225). This is the *method*, which Foucault calls 'genealogy'.

Foucault's genealogical history differs from traditional history, in that historians "take 'society' as the general horizon of their analysis, the instance relative to which they set out to situate this or that particular object …". By contrast, Foucault says:

> My general theme isn't society but the discourse of true and false, by which I mean the correlative formation of domains and objects and of the verifiable, falsifiable discourses that bear them; and it's not just their formation that interests me, but the effects in the real to which they are linked. (2002b: 237)

One of these effects is to make "a category" appear as "self-evident". As a result, for example, historians "believe they can write a history of sexuality and its repression". Genealogy writes the history "of the 'objectification' of those elements historians consider as objectively given …". Foucault acknowledges that this is a philosophical problem that does not interest the historian. But, if he is "posing it as a problem within historical analysis", he is not "demanding that history answer it". Says Foucault:

> I would just like to find out what effects the question produces within historical knowledge … .it's a matter of the effect on historical knowledge of a nominalist critique itself arrived at by way of a historical analysis. (2002b: 238)

Foucault's genealogies question such sociological categories as 'society' and the 'individual' by emphasizing their historical development. Even more, they *re*conceptualize the relationship between the 'individual' and 'society', as it has traditionally been understood. Since it emerged in the nineteenth century sociology has treated 'society' as a modern phenomenon, while 'individuals' were thought to have existed since the beginning of human history, organizing themselves in 'natural', face-to-face relationships. Foucault's genealogical histories show that the formation of 'individuals' has been *contemporaneous with* the formation of the 'social' or 'society'.

In brief, Foucault's studies have had an immense influence in the humanities and social sciences; by questioning traditional assumptions and methodologies, they have opened up new paths and possibilities for research in such diverse disciplines as history, anthropology, political science, sociology,[31] psychology, psychiatry, criminology and literary studies (see Lloyd and Thacker 1997, Binkley and Capetillo-Ponce 2010 and Owen 2014). So far as political theory is concerned, Foucault's insights point toward a different way of doing it. His genealogical writings challenge the divisions or dualisms that normative political theory has borrowed from philosophy – namely, reason vs. nature, subject vs. object, universal vs. particular and so forth; they also problematize the very concepts and categories the theorist uses in her theorization about political life. More importantly, they lead us to revise the notions of 'society' and 'politics', the 'social' and the 'political'.

31 See e.g. McHugh (2013). McHugh shows the relevance of Foucault's work to our understanding of the medical subject.

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Chapter 4
Phenomenology and Genealogy Compared

Differences

In a sense, both Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy are historical approaches. Yet the form of Hegel's and Foucault's historical approaches is totally different. Hegel's phenomenology is an history of consciousness. In Chapter 2 we saw that "consciousness" is "spirit" in its immediacy, i.e. in its inception. Initially "spirit" as "consciousness" is internally divided into the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. "Consciousness" develops into "spirit" and the stages along this way appear as "shapes of consciousness". The pathway that consciousness follows in this development constitutes its "*experience*" (*PhG*: 32, *PhS*: 21). So the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the experience of consciousness as it develops into spirit. In the course of this development consciousness attempts to make its subjective and objective aspects correspond; so it repeatedly shifts from one to the other. As I argued above, this is not mere repetition, for in the course of the phenomenological account both the subject and the object become more comprehensive; and each form of understanding or world-view ("Consciousness", "Self-consciousness", "Reason", "Spirit" and "Religion") is more adequate than the one preceding it. According to the reading of Hegel's phenomenology pursued here, phenomenological development is not simply linear but circular as well; that is to say, human comprehension is one of concentric circles, each circle including the previous one. By contrast, Foucault's genealogies are anti-linear and emphasize discontinuity. As we saw in Chapter 3, Foucault's genealogical history seeks to deconstruct what was previously regarded as unified (i.e. history as a chronological pattern of events emanating from a mystified but all-determining point of departure), while also attempting to identify an underlying continuity which is the product of "discontinuous systematicities" (Foucault 1981: 69). Foucauldian genealogy is an history of tracing 'origins'; as such, it questions the idea of origins or deeper meanings and unearths the *force relations* operating in particular events and historical developments.

Moreover, Hegel's phenomenology is an *holistic* enterprise. We have seen above that 'phenomenology' is the immanent development of truth as it is experienced (of "phenomenal knowledge"). Therefore, phenomenological science encompasses the entire "experience of consciousness", the truth of spirit in its totality. So the different aspects ("moments") of this truth are not "abstract moments" but can only be understood as integral parts of the whole; for this reason they appear as "shapes of consciousness". Each "shape of consciousness" can be understood solely within the context of the phenomenological account itself. Therefore, 'phenomenology' consists in an 'hermeneutic circle', inasmuch as the part can be understood only

in terms of the whole and the whole in terms of the part. By contrast, Foucault's genealogy is *perspectival*; it recognizes its interested character (Foucault 1984: 90). The purpose of genealogy is to contribute to a different understanding, to an alternative perception of things. So it criticizes particular possibilities that have become realities.

In addition, Hegelian phenomenology is an *hermeneutic* undertaking, in so far as it requires that the philosopher live the "experience of consciousness" from within, that he/she "surrender to the life of the object … confronting and expressing its inner necessity" (*PhG*: 45; *PhS*: 32). This means that the philosopher assumes the standpoint of each of the "shapes of consciousness" and renders explicit what is implicit in each form of understanding from the viewpoint of that form of understanding itself. Whereas Hegelian phenomenology attempts to grasp the significance of things from within them, Foucauldian genealogy ignores the actors' own interpretation(s) of the meaning of their actions. As we saw in Chapter 3, the writing of the human past by the genealogist is necessarily an *interpretation*, which itself is neither true nor false. For Foucault, the genealogist is an interpreter but *not* a hermeneutician. The genealogist as *interpreter* recognizes that the meaning he/she gives to history is doubtful (hence "gray"), "acknowledges its system of injustice" (Foucault 1984: 90) and the fact that his/her interpretation is subject to revision. The genealogist-interpreter has a sense of where he/she stands in history and does not ignore the fact that he/she is the product of historic and social circumstances; however, simultaneously he/she is able to distance him-/herself from his/her situation in order to examine things from afar.

Finally, Hegelian phenomenology consists in an *immanent* critique; that is, in 'phenomenology' critique is not carried out from a viewpoint external to 'phenomenology' (viz. the phenomenological experience of consciousness), but it is part and parcel of the development of consciousness to philosophical science. In more exact terms, critique consists in the successive reversals of human consciousness as it strives to make its subjective and objective aspects correspond. Thus, critique is an essential aspect in consciousness's experience. By contrast, in Foucauldian genealogy critique is *external*; its starting-point is a "principle of reversal" (Foucault 1981: 67, 70); that is to say, critique turns our deep-seated conceptions upside-down. As said above, the aim of Foucault's genealogy is to offer us a different *interpretation*, to make a different *perspective* known, in order to allow for the possibility of our becoming otherwise than we are. In Chapter 3 we saw how this "principle of reversal" operates when we discussed genealogy's reversal of the traditional conception of 'power' (see Foucault 1980: 96–102 and 2004: 27–34).

Implications for Social and Political Theory

The foregoing differences notwithstanding, Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogy make a common contribution to social and political theory;

that is, they go beyond such distinctions as subject/object, theory/praxis, universal/particular, reason/nature and mind/body – distinctions that have characterized all traditional philosophizing. From its inception in Athens in the fourth century B.C. Western thought has been dualistic. Dualities like the above have framed debates within social and political thought since antiquity. The boundaries and play of these binary oppositions changed over time and varied in different theories of (or perspectives on) social and political reality. All the same, social and political theorizing has not been able to escape from the fetters of these dualisms. Thus, it has been confined to the following conclusion: social and political reality is not as it should be, that is to say, it falls short of an ideal. Consequently, most social and political theory has been normative, its purpose being to lay down a blueprint of a society. Put differently, the task of social and political theorizing has been prescriptive, i.e. to tell people what they ought to do. Both Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogies can help us to re-think the ways in which social and political theory is practised. They also point the way towards a re-conceptualization of the relation between the theorist (the subject) and the object of analysis (or knowledge). In other words, what is the relation between the subject and the object of knowledge? How does the subject come to know? And *what* does he or she come to know? What is this *knowledge*? Are the theorist (the subject) and knowledge (the object) static? Or do they change through interaction? In Hegel's phenomenology the acquisition of knowledge and the development of the object go hand in hand, while Foucault's genealogies show that both subject and object are constituted in discourses.

Regarding Hegel's contribution to social and political thought, I suggest that we take Hegel's phenomenology as the basis for understanding his social and political philosophy. As was said in Chapter 2 above, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* was meant to introduce the reader to philosophical science proper. When Hegel wrote the *Philosophy of Right* (1967, 1995), he intended it to be read according to his philosophical system, as presented in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1952, 1977), the *Science of Logic* (1998) and the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1927–30, 1970, 1971, 1975). According to this view, the *Philosophy of Right* is essentially a phenomenology.[1] What form does a phenomenological reading of the *Philosophy of Right* take? The *Philosophy of Right* consists of three parts, which should be understood as "moments" or aspects of the whole – namely, "Abstract Right", "Morality" and "Ethical Life". Essentially, what we have is – in Hegelian terminology – a development from immediacy or abstract universality through particularization and difference to a differentiated unity. In fact, "ethical life" – more precisely, its highest "moment", the state – is the beginning, in the sense that it is the whole within which the earlier parts of the *Philosophy of Right* should be

1 I discussed the extent to which Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* can (and should) be read phenomenologically with Kimberly Hutchings during the academic year 1995–1996 at The University of Edinburgh and, doubtless, my reading was influenced by her. See also Hutchings 1999: 98–109.

understood. The development from "Abstract Right" through "Morality" to "Ethical Life" is a logical one. Hegel's purpose is to show that "Ethical Life" is *presupposed* by "Abstract Right" and "Morality"; that is to say, "Abstract Right" and "Morality" do not make sense outside the context of "Ethical Life", this being their determining ground. But the reason why Hegel begins from "Abstract Right" rather than "Ethical Life" is because he wishes to philosophize without foundations.[2] In other words, rather than positing "Ethical Life" in an *a priori* manner, he presents "Ethical Life" as arising out of the contradictions implicit in "Abstract Right" and "Morality"; so what we have is a development of a simple conception of right ("Abstract Right") through a more comprehensive understanding of human relations and institutions ("Morality") to a yet more comprehensive understanding of these relations as well as legal, social and political institutions ("Ethical Life"). Hegel's aim is to show that the state, as the highest "moment" of "Ethical Life", determines what is right and wrong as well as morality. Moreover, in real life the individual can live only with other individuals within a political community. Human beings are from birth *already* situated *within* a given political community and can lead their lives only within it; they are embedded in specific social practices and depend on the institutional framework of the particular historical community in which they find themselves and which 'cultivates' or 'educates' them (the Hegelian word is *bilden*), as well as shaping their identity and lives. What is distinctive in Hegel is that only through relating oneself to another can a human being be constituted as a self; thus, one's identity is one's relation to another. This is what Hegel means by "recognition" or self-recognition in another.[3] Hegel's examination of the legal, social and political institutions of his time in the *Philosophy of Right* is phenomenological, in so far as it takes the form of an immanent development from "Abstract Right" to "Morality" and then to "Ethical Life". So Hegel's political philosophy is not prescriptive; that is, it does not lay out a blueprint of good moral, legal, social and political institutions. This does not mean that the *Philosophy of Right* consists in a mere empirical description of the Prussian state, thereby endorsing the status quo. Rather, as a phenomenology, it explores contemporary society and politics in terms of the principles of its self-understanding, as it is articulated in the legal, social and political institutions of its day.

The lesson we draw from Hegelian phenomenology, so far as social and political theorizing is concerned, is that, rather than trying to design good social and political institutions on the basis of criteria drawn from a God-like position, the theorist's task consists in eliciting the normativity immanent in contemporary social and political life. Engaging in social and political theorizing, in accordance with phenomenology, involves the identification of the principles and values implied in social and political institutions, and their evaluation in terms of their

2 For the way in which phenomenology points the way toward a philosophizing without foundations see below (the section entitled "Toward a Non-Foundational Knowledge").

3 For Hegel's notion of "recognition" see Sembou (2003).

own standards. In so far as the theorist makes normative judgements, these reflect his or her location in time and place. So social and political theorizing need not confine normative debate to an ideal world. Although, "the clash between first and second best worlds" has usually been seen "as grounds for condemnation of the latter", phenomenology teaches us that what matters is actuality: "Here the presumption is that any normative prescription will be judged ultimately on its truth in the second best world" (Hutchings 1999: 148).

As to Foucauldian genealogy, as we saw in Chapter 3 above, "The role of an intellectual is not to tell others what they have to do". For "By what right would he do so?" Foucault adds: "And remember all the prophecies, promises, injunctions, and programs that intellectuals have managed to formulate over the last two centuries and whose effects we can now see" (Foucault 1990: 265). Rather, the theorist's task is to engage in a genealogical analysis in order to demonstrate that many ideas and institutions that we regard as given are historical constructs. According to genealogy, the theorist's job is to contribute important elements to the perception of things; people can then make use of those elements – if they want – in order to make their own political choices. Genealogy also teaches us that social and political theory cannot ignore its own power effects, i.e. what or who is included and what or who is excluded from its normative prescriptions, for truth/knowledge and power (relations) implicate each other (Foucault 1975: 36/1991: 27; 1976: 80–81/1998: 60; 1994c: 158–160/1980: 131–133; 1994c: 175–176/1980: 93).[4] Therefore, a theorist should be aware where his or her normative claims come from.

The foregoing do not imply that a Hegelian-phenomenological and/or a Foucauldian-genealogical approach means that normative theory is not possible. However, as Hutchings (1999) has suggested,

> The Hegelian/Foucauldian approach to normative theory is premised on the possibility of normative truth but without the sanitizing effect achieved by the translation of this truth to a higher, first best sphere. Normative truth is in the world, it is contested and, in the process of that contestation, it is likely to be experienced by some … as painful. (150)

All in all, Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogy alike demonstrate that truth is open-ended and that knowledge is interconnected with human activity. Thus, it makes no sense to speak of *the* truth *simpliciter*.

Overcoming the 'Correspondence Theory of Truth'

At a deeper level, both Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogy question the conception of knowledge and truth prevalent within the analytic tradition of

4 As we have seen, this is the meaning of Foucault's term "power-knowledge" (« *pouvoir-savoir* ») (1975: 32/1991: 27–28).

philosophy and philosophy of social science, namely, the 'correspondence theory of truth'. This asserts that truth consists in a correspondence between thought (the subject) and the objective world.[5] I will now turn to consider how Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogy respectively pose a challenge to the 'correspondence theory'.[6]

Hegel's Phenomenology

My reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology* in Chapter 2 should have made apparent that my interpretation of Hegel is in discordance with traditional interpretations of Hegel and is revisionist, in this sense; it falls into that tradition of Hegel scholarship that advances a non-metaphysical and non-foundational understanding of Hegel.[7]

We saw that Hegel defines his *Phenomenology of Spirit* as "Science of the *experience of consciousness*" (*PhG*: 74; *PhS*: 56). "Consiousness" is "spirit" in its immediacy; in its inception "spirit" as "consciousness" is internally divided into two aspects ("moments"), "knowing and the objectivity negative to knowing", namely, subject and object (*PhG*: 32; *PhS*: 21). We saw that "consciousness" develops into "spirit", and that the *Phenomenology* consists in an exposition of this development. To the extent that the *Phenomenology* presents this development as *necessary*, it is "*Science*" (*PhG*: 74; *PhS*: 56). Hegel's phenomenology, as "Science of the *experience of consciousness*", is "the detailed history of the *education* [*Bildung*] of consciousness itself to the standpoint of Science" (*PhG*: 67; *PhS*: 50).

Given that subject and object are two elements of consciousness itself, consciousness is the dynamic cognitive interrelationship between the knowing subject and the known object (*PhG*: 70; *PhS*: 52). It follows that there is nothing outside the experience of consciousness. Taken separately, subject and object are abstractions. This challenges the 'correspondence theory of truth', which presupposes a distinction between the subject (thought) and the objective world (the object). Hegel's *Phenomenology* shows that conscious experience consists precisely in this dynamic interrelation of subject and object. 'Phenomenology' is concerned with the different ways in which the knowing subject comes to comprehend objective reality, where neither subject nor object are static; rather,

5 This implies that "for each true proposition there should *be* a fact" (B.B.R.: 166). But this may be misleading, not least because the very use of the word 'fact' is problematical: for one thing, one may take 'fact' to be "an alternative expression for 'true statement'"; for another, one may be led to the conclusion that "for every true statement there exists 'one' and its own precisely corresponding fact …" (Austin 2005a: 153). For the status of facts see the debate between Strawson (2005) and Austin (2005b). Philosophers have also noted the ambiguity of the term 'correspondence'; for this see the debate between Austin (2005a) and Cousin (1950: esp. 164–165, 171–172).

6 See also Sembou (2007 and 2010).

7 E.g. Hartmann (1972), Westphal (1979), Rose (1981), Houlgate (1986 and 2004), Maker (1994), Sallis (1995), Hutchings (2003).

both subject and object develop in the process, as consciousness attempts to make its subjective and objective aspects correspond to each other (*PhG*: 71–73; *PhS*: 53–55).[8] We have seen above in what this self-examination consists.

Not only does phenomenology exclude the separation (or dissociation) of subject and object, which the 'correspondence theory' presupposes. It also demonstrates that truth is not something definite. Rather, the knowing subject takes an object to be true – "this object is the essence or the *in-itself*"; at the same time, however, it is an object *for consciousness*. Therefore:

> … consciousness now has two objects: one is the first *in-itself*, the second is the *being-for-consciousness of this in-itself*. (*PhG*: 73; *PhS*: 55)

Initially, it would appear that this latter is not an object but only "the reflection of consciousness into itself", viz. "its knowledge of that first object". Nevertheless, from a phenomenological point of view, it is irrelevant whether there are any objects outside consciousness's experience; what matters is the way(s) human consciousness cognitively interacts with the world, and, in this sense, there is no object independent of the subject. Consequently, "the True" is not an independent entity (an "in-itself") but "the being-for-consciousness of this in-itself" (*PhG*: 73; *PhS*: 55). Phenomenological experience is distinctive in that the knowing subject's realization of the untruth of its first object does not come about once the subject runs across another object by chance; nor does the second object come externally, as it were. Rather, given that consciousness is engaged in a struggle to make its subjective and objective aspects correspond to one another, the new object emerges out of consciousness itself; it is thereby the result of "a *reversal of consciousness itself*". However, consciousness is not in the position to understand how the new object has come into view. This is evident only to the philosopher (i.e. Hegel and his reader(s)). The philosopher observes consciousness's successive reversals and elevates them "into a scientific progression" (*PhG*: 73–74; *PhS*: 55), namely, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. We saw above (in Chapter 2) that, without intervening with the experience of consciousness, the philosopher (the phenomenological observer or the "we") turns this experience into science; this he does because he is able to see that the negation of one object does not result in nothingness but in a new object, which emerges out of the reversal of consciousness. The emergence of the new object occurs "behind the back of consciousness", however. To quote Hegel:

> Thus in the movement there occurs a moment of *being-in-itself* or *being-for-us* which is not present to the consciousness comprehended in the experience itself. (*PhG*: 74; *PhS*: 56)

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8 To be sure, Hegel describes the way in which consciousness tests itself in correspondence language. However, as I argue in this chapter, the *Phenomenology* criticizes immanently the 'correspondence theory'.

We have seen that, in perceiving the consecutive reversals of consciousness and presenting them in a phenomenological account, the philosopher shows their *necessity*; hence the scientific status of the experience of consciousness. Within this phenomenological exposition the different ways in which consciousness attempts to grasp reality appear as "*patterns of consciousness*" (*PhG*: 74–75; *PhS*: 56).

In the course of the *Phenomenology* both the knowing subject and the object of knowledge become more and more comprehensive. To begin with, the subject appears as consciousness ("sense-certainty", "perception", "understanding") and the object first as external reality (a mere 'This' in the form of 'Now' and 'Here', then a "Thing") and subsequently as consciousness (the notion of force, the "realm of laws", "infinity"). "Perception" emerges out of the inadequacies of "sense-certainty" and its successive failures to make its subjective and objective elements correspond to one another; it appears as an advancement over "sense-certainty", but it too fails to live up to its own standards; following several reversals, it gives way to the "understanding", the next form of consciousness. As soon as consciousness realizes that its conception of the world as external is inadequate, it reconsiders its interaction with the world. Now the knowing subject appears as "desire" (subjective life) and the object as life in its totality. As "desire" the subject is set to negate the "other" in order to find itself in that other. But the subject as "desire" cannot reach satisfaction by simply abolishing (living) objects; as soon as it destroys (consumes) one object, it is overcome by a new desire and this process goes on forever. The subject becomes a self-consciousness and its object becomes (another) self-consciousness (life-and-death struggle, master-slave relation, stoicism, scepticism, the unhappy consciousness). Self-consciousness reaches its limits in the experience of the "unhappy consciousness", which cannot reconcile its changeable and unchangeable aspects and thereby collapses; out of it emerges another form of understanding, namely, "Reason". Now self-consciousness is certain that it is all reality (idealism); reason permeates reality, it has both a subjective and an objective aspect. Following the failure of the knowing subject (as "observing Reason") to adequately comprehend its object (it foolishly grasps the essence of the self to be the skull, *PhG*: 240 ff; *PhS*: 197 ff), the subject gives up its attempt to *find* itself in objects and tries to *impose* itself *on* the objective world through action (the hedonist, the romantic and the quixotic self-consciousness; the "spiritual animal kingdom"; "reason as lawgiver" and "reason as testing laws"). Once "Reason" proves to be untenable on its own terms (anything can pass the universalizability test inasmuch as it is formally self-consistent), a new form of understanding emerges, namely, "Spirit". Each "shape" of spirit (i.e. form of life) has both a subjective and an objective aspect, and an immanent development is brought about by the failures of all forms of life (Greek antiquity, the Roman Empire, feudal Europe, pre-revolutionary and revolutionary France, the moral world-view and the community of "beautiful souls") to attain an adequate understanding of the principles underlying their existence. In the penultimate "shape", that of "Religion", the subject is self-conscious spirit and

the object of knowledge is absolute spirit. The religious form of understanding develops from "Natural Religion" through the "Religion of Art" to the "Revealed Religion" as self-conscious spirit attempts to attain an awareness of itself (the object of its contemplation). But, although in its developed form (viz. in the "Revealed Religion") self-conscious spirit comes to grasp its essence, its self-understanding is imperfect due to the form of its knowledge ("*Vorstellung*")[9] (*PhG*: 480; *PhS*: 416).

We have seen above that "absolute knowing", which appears as the last "shape" of spirit, is not a positive doctrine.[10] Rather, it is the realization that all attempts by human beings to grasp reality and their interaction with the world in terms of the 'correspondence theory of truth' have failed. As Hegel's *Phenomenology* shows, all the successive attempts by the knowing subject to comprehend its object have failed on their own terms; hence Hegel's phenomenological account consists in an *immanent critique*. No matter whether both the subject and the object become increasingly more comprehensive, still they cannot correspond to one another by the very standards that each one of the "shapes" sets itself.[11]

To say that Hegel's phenomenology is an immanent critique of the 'correspondence theory' is not the same as to say that the purpose of the *Phenomenology* is to abolish the distinction between subject and object. Indeed, this is the most common interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; according to this view, "absolute knowing" consists precisely in the overcoming of the subject/object division. But this interpretation sees "absolute knowing" as something positive, to wit, an adequate, comprehensive form of knowledge.[12] In saying that the *Phenomenology* challenges the 'correspondence theory', I

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9 Miller translates "*Vorstellung*" as "picture-thought".

10 It is a know*ing* (*Wissen*) and not some know*ledge* (*Kenntnis*); this implies that "absolute knowing" is an approach or stance rather than a metaphysical truth. The adjective "absolute" has a distinctively Hegelian sense; it means something that is not conditioned by anything else and is thereby *self-determining*.

11 Therefore, I disagree with Harris (1997) and Westphal (1997) when they say that Hegel has a 'correspondence theory of truth'. In fact, Harris can see a 'correspondence theory of truth' of a special kind in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and not what is ordinarily understood by 'correspondence theory of truth'. He says:

> He [Hegel] has a "correspondence theory" of "truth"; but "Truth" is a property of assertions about "knowledge", not of assertions about "the world". … What is *called* "the correspondence theory" does not deserve the honorific name of "theory" at all. It is a formal logical truth that can be stated in a single sentence. Only in Hegel's theory of "experience" does "correspondence" become, for the first time, *interesting* (1997: 11).

12 Both traditional/metaphysical interpretations if Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and phenomenological readings support this view. For a traditional/metaphysical reading see, among others, Findlay (1958: esp. 144–148) and Taylor (1993: esp. 48–49, 119, 214–221). For a phenomenological reading see Hyppolite (1946), Kojève (1947), Lauer (1976) and Westphal (1979 and 1990). See also Bloch (1951), Gadamer (1971), Pöggeler (1973), Heinrichs (1974), Fulda (1975).

mean that its purpose is negative;[13] that is to say, its aim is to demonstrate what philosophical thinking is *not*. And philosophical thinking is not thinking in terms of a correspondence of a subject and an object.[14]

Foucault's Genealogy

We saw in Chapter 3 that Foucault's Nietzschean genealogy attacks the notion of "origins". Nietzsche had used the terms "*Ursprung*", "*Entstehung*" and "*Herkunft*" most of the times interchangeably when referring to "origin" (Foucault 1994b: 137–138; 1984: 77–78). Foucault's genealogy opposes "*Ursprung*" in particular. "*Ursprung*" has at least three connotations. First, it suggests "that which was already there", namely, a hidden reality or meaning (a truth) which heretofore human understanding has been unable to grasp (Foucault 1994b: 138; 1984: 78). However, as we saw above, the notion of the "origin" ("*Ursprung*") is one of those metaphysical ideas that have dominated philosophy for two thousand years. In challenging the metaphysics of the origin, genealogy also disputes the 'correspondence theory of truth' it implies. The idea of the origin implies the 'correspondence theory' because it presumes that the origin is some 'fact' that needs to be discovered; truth would then consist in a relation of correspondence between a proposition and this 'fact'. Nevertheless, what characterizes genealogy is an historical anti-essentialism, which takes the form of a radical skepticism towards 'truth' (as traditionally understood). Groping into the "history of reason", the genealogist "learns that it was born in an altogether 'reasonable' fashion – from chance", from the competition among scholars (Foucault 1994b: 138; quoted from Foucault 1984: 78), what Nietzsche called the "will to truth" (Foucault 1980: 66). Accordingly, as a commentator has remarked, "… a central task of genealogy in accounting for its own conditions of possibility is to generate an account of how it is that the will to truth becomes conscious of itself as a problem" (Owen 1997: 147). Second, the notion of "*Ursprung*" connotes that the beginning is always the moment of perfection (Foucault 1994b: 139; 1984: 79). As such, it appears as an objective reality, a 'fact' to be found. However, genealogy uncovers that "historical beginnings are lowly", that there is nothing noble at the beginning of time (Foucault 1994b: 139; 1984: 79). Third, the notion of the "origin" ("*Ursprung*") implies an initial state of affairs which was "the site of truth", "… the point where the truth of things corresponded to a truthful discourse, the site of a fleeting articulation that discourse has obscured and finally lost" (Foucault 1994b: 139; quoted from Foucault 1984: 79). But genealogy demonstrates that the idea of a "truthful discourse" that corresponded to or fitted "the truth of things"

13 In emphasizing the negative outcome of the *Phenomenology*, I am following Bubner (1970) and Maker (1994: Part One, esp. 71–82, 86–89, 89–93, 100–106).

14 For why this thinking, peculiar to what Maker (1994) terms the "structure of consciousness", is self-defeating see also Maker (1994: 103–106); "structure of consciousness" (Maker 1994: 71–74, 76, 78, 81, 89–93, 95, 102–106, 109–110, 114, 129).

(i.e. the facts) is not plausible and that faith in an original truth subsequently veiled by historical development is just a metaphysical illusion. In point of fact, the very idea of "truth" is itself an error (Foucault 1994b: 139–140; 1984: 79–80).

We have noted above that, instead of searching for "*Ursprung*", genealogy concerns itself with "*Herkunft*" and "*Entstehung*" (Foucault 1994b: 140; 1984: 80). A genealogical analysis of "*Herkunft*" is an exercise of deconstruction; it fragments what has hitherto been regarded as unified; it decomposes what were considered to be unitary entities or ideas into their constituent parts or elements.[15] More importantly, genealogy seeks "to identify the accidents, the minute deviations, – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us" (Foucault 1994b: 141; quoted from Foucault 1984: 81); and it shows that there is no given reality to which language could correspond. Rather than attempting to give a unity or "unbroken continuity" to the past, genealogy uncovers those "discontinuous systematicities" (« *systématicités discontinues* ») which have made us what we are. And, although these discontinuous series have a certain regularity, there are no "links of mechanical causality or of ideal necessity between the elements which constitute them". On the contrary, events are the result of accident, chance or "aléa" (Foucault 1971: 59–61; quoted from Foucault 1981: 69). Moreover, genealogy explores the emergence ("*Entstehung*") of a battle which determines a space (Foucault 1994b: 143–144; 1984: 83–84); this latter is "a 'non-place', a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space". Consequently, emergence "always occurs in the interstice" (Foucault 1994b: 144; quoted from Foucault 1984: 85).

Genealogy also challenges the 'correspondence theory of truth' by denying there is 'something' to be interpreted – whether that be a concealed meaning, an underlying truth, some 'real' entity awaiting to be discovered or unchanging laws. It uncovers that the history of humankind is nothing but a sequence of interpretations. And the more the genealogist unearths an interpretation, the more he finds that there is no fixed meaning but only interpretations. Simultaneously, the arbitrariness of all interpretations is exposed; each new interpretation is contingent on some newly emergent configuration of power Foucault 1984: 86). Human history is characterized by "relations of power, not relations of meaning" (Foucault 1980: 114 and 1994c: 145). The above-mentioned account of truth has largely been due to the commonsense belief that "Whether what is said about the world is true surely must depend on how the world is" (Rundle 1995: 166). But genealogy's refusal to acknowledge the existence of a substratum of reality which has so far eluded the investigator strikes a blow, as it were, to any attempt to establish a supposedly exact correspondence between thought (or language) and objective reality (the facts).[16] And, as noted in Chapter 3 above, if in his early

15 For a definition of "*Herkunft*" see Foucault 1994b: 140–141; 1984: 80–81.

16 To my mind, the best (and, perhaps, only) study that considers Foucault's challenge to the 'correspondence theory of truth' is Prado 2000. For an exploration of Foucault's five

work on madness[17] Foucault had presupposed "the existence of a sort of living, voluble and anxious madness which the mechanisms of power and psychiatry were supposed to have come to repress and reduce to silence" (Foucault 1980: 118–119), by the 1970s he had come to see that there was no substantial reality (*the* truth) to be grasped.

In addition, Foucault's genealogy questions the very notions which the 'correspondence theory' presupposes, to wit, the subject and the object. It explores how the constitution of objects (e.g. madness or criminality) takes place within history. At the same time, it queries the idea of the "constituent subject" and analyzes "the constitution of the subject within a historical framework". This approach is more radical than that of the French phenomenologists, who had historicized the subject by placing it within a process of historical development (Foucault 1980: 117 and 1994c: 147). For by examining the conditions of its constitution, genealogy casts doubt on the subject itself.[18] It is one of the features of genealogy as "effective history" that it dissolves all solidity, breaks what were hitherto taken to be unitary entities down to their elements, relativizes truth and "refuses the certainty of absolutes"; "… it places within a process of development everything considered immortal in man" (Foucault 1994b: 146–147 [quotes 147]; quoted from Foucault 1984: 87). It shows that the self is not a unity; the human body too is dissected, 'cut into pieces' (Foucault 1994b: 147; 1984: 87). Challenging essentialist notions of the self like the Cartesian ego and the Kantian self, Foucauldian genealogy demonstrates that the subject is constructed (see Foucault 1982: 208–216).[19] The subject is constructed by investing a body with certain habits; it is then a subject in the double sense of being subject to disciplinary mechanisms and of being a subject of experience (Foucault 1975 and 1991). Moreover, as the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* demonstrates, power manufactures subjects as sexual beings; simultaneously, this understanding of subjectivity is implanted in people's minds (Foucault 1976 and 1998).

Challenging the assumption of traditional history that there are 'facts' to be interpreted, Foucault's genealogies pose the following question: Are there any 'facts'? In what follows I shall look at two famous examples.

The first example is drawn from *Discipline and Punish*. This work constitutes "a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge" (Foucault 1975: 30; quoted from Foucault 1991: 23); the latter is set in contradistinction to the procedure of investigation characteristic of earlier times. Thus, from the Middle

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notions of truth see Prado 2000: Chapter 6; for an argument against the view that Foucault's understanding of truth leads to irrealism see Prado 2000: Chapter 7.

17 See Foucault 1961 and 2006.

18 Foucault often uses the term "dé-subjectivation"; see e.g. Foucault 1994d: 43 and 2002b: 241 ("desubjectivation").

19 Foucault 2000b: "What are the processes of subjectivation and objectivation that make it possible for the subject qua subject to become an object of knowledge [*connaissance*], as a subject?" (460) See also *ibid.*, 461–462.

Ages until the great penal reforms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "to judge was to establish the *truth* of a crime …".[20] To that purpose, one needed to have "Knowledge of the offence, knowledge of the offender, knowledge of the law …" (Foucault 1975: 26; quoted from Foucault 1991: 19). What Foucault goes on to say deserves, I think, to be quoted at length:

> But now a quite different question of truth is inscribed in the course of the penal judgement. The question is no longer simply: 'Has the act been established and is it punishable?' But also: 'What *is* this act, what *is* this act of violence or this murder? To what level or to what field of reality does it belong? Is it phantasy, a psychotic reaction, a delusional episode, a perverse action?' It is no longer simply: 'Who committed it?' But: 'How can we assign the causal process that produced it? Where did it originate in the author himself? Instinct, unconscious, environment, heredity?' It is no longer simply: 'What law punishes this offence?' But: 'What would be the most appropriate measures to take? How do we see the future development of the offender? What would be the best way of rehabilitating him?' (Foucault 1975: 27; quoted from Foucault 1991: 19)

What Foucault's genealogical study reveals is not only that the establishment of facts is a matter of interpretation, but, more importantly, that there are no 'facts' *simpliciter* open to interpretation; rather, 'facts' themselves are constructions. Therefore, one cannot find facts in the world nor in language. What one does find is interpretations. Simultaneously, genealogy questions the validity of each interpretation by exposing the configuration of power which produces it:

> A whole set of assessing, diagnostic, normative judgements concerning the criminal have become lodged in the framework of penal judgement. *Another truth* has penetrated the truth that was required by the legal machinery; a truth which, entangled with the first, has turned the assertion of guilt into a strange scientifico-juridical complex. (Foucault 1975: 27; quoted from Foucault 1991: 19)[21]

As opposed to the 'correspondence theory of truth' which asserts that there is *only one* correct (exact) relation of correspondence of thought (or a proposition) to objective reality (or fact), viz. *one truth*, Foucault's genealogy reveals that there is *no single* truth but truths instead, these truths being no more than interpretations. Foucault shows how the very definition (hence the truth) of an action as an offence or crime changed in the course of the nineteenth century with reference to madness. According to article 64 of the 1810 Code, there was no offence if the perpetrator was mentally ill. Therefore, the procedure of establishing madness was distinct from the process of defining an action as an offence or crime. Gradually,

20 My emphasis.
21 My emphasis.

the judges came to interpret the aforesaid article as stating that the gravity of the offence should be determined according to the degree of sanity or insanity of the malefactor (Foucault 1975: 27–28; 1991: 19–20). Consequently, nowadays "… the sentence that condemns or acquits is not simply a judgement of guilt, a legal decision that lays down punishment, it bears within it an assessment of normality and a technical prescription for a possible normalization. Today the judge – magistrate or juror – certainly does more than 'judge'" (Foucault 1975: 28; quoted from Foucault 1991: 20–21). Nor is the judge the only person to judge, for that matter; psychiatrists, psychologists, educationalists, officials who implement the sentences and prison officers all have a say. These experts do not concern themselves with the definition of the crime (its 'truth'), but with "the administration of the penalty" (Foucault 1975: 29; 1991: 21). Whereas initially "psychiatric expertise was called upon to formulate 'true' propositions as to the part that the liberty of the offender had played in the act he had committed", "it is now called upon to suggest a prescription of what might be called his 'medico-judicial treatment'" (Foucault 1975: 29; quoted from Foucault 1991: 22). So genealogy uncovers that what underlies the decreasing severity of punishment is "a whole *new system of truth*";[22] "A corpus of knowledge, techniques, 'scientific' discourses is formed and becomes entangled with the practice of the power to punish" (Foucault 1975: 30; quoted from Foucault 1991: 23).

The second example comes from the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. Foucault asks in respect of what he calls the "repressive hypothesis": "Is sexual repression truly an established historical fact [*une évidence historique*]?" (Foucault 1976: 18; quoted from Foucault 1998: 10) If sexuality has been an object of continuous discussion since the seventeenth century, this is because, Foucault argues, it is linked to "effects of power". Therefore, what is important, from a genealogical point of view, "is the over-all 'discursive fact', the way in which sex is 'put into discourse'" (Foucault 1976: 20; quoted from Foucault 1998: 11). The explosion of discussion about sex in the Victorian age was due to a "type of power" which bourgeois society "brought to bear on the body and on sex". Foucault's genealogical history of sexuality shows that "this power had neither the form of the law, nor the effects of the taboo", as popular belief would have it.

> On the contrary, it acted by multiplication of singular sexualities.[…] It … included it [i.e. sexuality][23] in the body as a mode of specification of individuals. […] it attracted its varieties by means of spirals in which pleasure and power reinforced one another.[…] it provided places of maximum saturation. (Foucault 1976: 64–65; quoted from Foucault 1998: 47)

As a result, there emerged "four figures" that were simultaneously "objects of knowledge": "the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, the Malthusian couple,

22 My emphasis.
23 My square brackets.

and the perverse adult" (Foucault 1976: 139; quoted from Foucault 1998: 105). These four categories of people were products of four strategies which "formed specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex" (Foucault 1976: 137; quoted from Foucault 1998: 103): the "hysterization of women's bodies", the "pedagogization of children's sex", the "socialization of procreative behavior" and the "psychiatrization of perverse pleasure", respectively (Foucault 1976: 137–138; quoted from Foucault 1998: 104–105). So, far from being an historical fact, sexuality is "a historical construct" (« *un dispositif historique* ») (Foucault 1998: 105 and 1976: 139). Therefore, the real questions are whether prohibition and censorship are not forms of power rather than repression and whether all this discourse on sex is not itself part of the power it criticizes as "repression" (Foucault 1976: 18 and 1998: 10).

To sum up, Foucauldian genealogy unmasks the politics of truth. As Foucault says:

> It is true that Western philosophy, since Descartes at least, has always been involved with the problem of knowledge [*connaissance*].[…] Since Nietzsche this question of truth has been transformed. It is no longer, 'What is the surest path to Truth?', but, 'What is the hazardous career that Truth has followed?' (Foucault 1994c: 30–31; quoted from Foucault 1980: 66)

For this reason Foucault usually refers to "régimes of truth" (« *régimes de vérité* ») (1980: 112, 131, 133; 1994c: 143, 158, 160). Far from the common belief that wants truth to be an independent domain, which has nothing to do with politics, power struggles and dominations, truth/knowledge and power (relations) implicate each other (Foucault 1994c: 158–160, 175–176; 1980: 93, 131–133; 1975: 36; 1991: 27; 1976: 80–81; 1998: 60),[24] hence Foucault's term "power-knowledge" (« *pouvoir-savoir* »). Genealogy analyzes "power-knowledge relations" not in terms of a subject who is or is not independent of a system of power, but rather "the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge" are considered to be "so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations" (Foucault 1975: 36; quoted from Foucault 1991: 27–28).

Toward a Non-Foundational Knowledge

In the foregoing I have shown how Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy respectively cast doubt on the 'correspondence theory of truth'. I suggest

24 For the interrelation of truth and power (the procedures for the production and regulation of discourse) see Foucault 1971: 10–47 and 1981: 52–64. For a "régime of truth" as distinct from ideology see Foucault 1980: 102 and 1994c: 183–184. For the way genealogy differs from a critique of ideology see Owen 2002.

that therein lies their common contribution to philosophy. By challenging the aforesaid model of knowledge, they point they way towards a re-conceptualization of the relation between the theorist (the subject) and the object of analysis (or knowledge). I have also argued that they question such dichotomies as subject/object, universal/particular, mind/body and reason/nature – dualisms that have underlain much philosophical thinking as well as social and political theorizing. The 'correspondence theory' and the above-mentioned binary oppositions are typical of foundationalist thinking. Foundationalism starts from the assumption that there is a fundamental distinction between the subject of knowledge (the Cartesian ego) and the objective world. So, according to foundationalism, there must be some standard independent of knowledge by means of which this knowledge can be tested. The test consists in determining whether there is a correspondence between knowledge and the object. This means that foundationalism is trying to do two things at the same time: it must retain the distinction between knowledge and the object, so that the comparison between knowledge and the object can be carried out; simultaneously, it aims to show that knowledge and the object match. In other words, foundationalism wants to demonstrate that there is a difference between knowledge and the object, and yet that they coincide.[25] However, as it has been remarked:

> The problem … is that if we have simultaneous identity-and-difference, we no longer have anything that can be picked out and identified as 'knowledge', on the one hand, and as the 'object' on the other. The state of identity-and-difference between knowledge and object which must be required in order to found knowledge is one in which 'knowledge' and 'object' disappear, for insofar as *both* are identical and different at once, they are neither the same nor different.[…] The fatal problem for foundationalism is that both the identity of knowledge and object and the difference must, but cannot, be attained at one and the same time, if this model of knowledge is to be grounded. (Maker 1994: 62–63)

According to the 'correspondence theory', knowledge is descriptive; that is to say, knowledge is a mirror of objective reality. However, as I have shown above, both Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogy question this conception of cognition; Hegel's phenomenology by showing that conscious experience is a dynamic interrelationship of subject and object; Foucault's genealogy by demonstrating that both the subject of cognition and the various objects of knowledge are constructed – more precisely, they are constituted in discourses. By questioning the idea of an objective reality apart from human experience and activity, both the aforesaid approaches query the notion of the 'given'. They thus challenge one more feature of foundationalism, namely, the view that all knowledge rests on (certain) presuppositions. For foundationalism,

25 For foundationalism and the correspondence model of cognition see Maker 1994: 60 ff. I am partially following Maker here.

there cannot possibly be a presuppositionless knowledge for at least two reasons: first, because, as I said above, there must always be some standard independent of knowledge on the basis of which the validity of this knowledge can be measured; and, second, because this idea of the 'given' means that there is an object independent of knowledge. By calling into question both the distinction of knowledge and object and the notion of the 'given', Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy alike point towards a non-foundational knowledge, that is, a knowledge without presuppositions. Regarding Hegel's phenomenology, "… consciousness instantiates that very conception of cognition which specifically holds that all cognition *must* begin with a presupposition …" (Maker 1994: 90). So "the suspension of consciousness" at the end of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* implies that "the structure of presupposing itself" is suspended (Maker 1994: 91). As for Foucault's genealogy, it paves the way for a presupposition*less* knowledge because it debunks the notion of the origin as well as the idea that there are 'facts' and underlying essences awaiting to be discovered; but also because it poses a challenge to all constants, including those of the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. At a deeper level, Foucault's genealogy puts into question the ground of foundational thinking, what May (1993) has called "the space of interiority" (57). This latter is implicitly questioned in the genealogy of psychology in particular; for what psychological discourse assumes is the existence of the mind, whose structure is conceived in ahistorical and transcendental terms (May 1993: 57–58). It is on the human mind that traditional philosophizing, as well as social and political theory has found its foundations. This is because most Western social and political theory is founded on reason. This is certainly true of Plato's and Kant's moral and political philosophy,[26] but also of social contract theory (in the sense that the state represents a rational solution over the "state of nature", where passions rule; not to mention the fact that "natural laws" are themselves dictates of reason)[27] and of John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism (in so far as his utilitarianism introduces a distinction between 'higher' and 'lower' pleasures, his project clearly aiming at a cultivation of the former).[28] This is also the case with much contemporary social and political theory (e.g. Rawls's political philosophy and Habermas's moral, social and political theory).[29] In debates within social and political theory the relationship between the terms of each of the aforesaid dichotomies is not equal; it is always the mind (or the soul) that dominates the body; reason subdues nature (or the passions); the universal is associated with the rational, whereas the particular with natural or other contingent factors; the subject is a rational ego. By raising doubts about psychology, Foucauldian genealogy also questions the foundation of all hitherto philosophical thinking. As May (1993) says:

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26 See Plato (2000) and Kant (1990 and 1993).

27 See Hobbes (1992) and Locke (1992).

28 See Mill (1991).

29 See Rawls (1973) and (1996), and Habermas (1981, 1990, 1992, 1995a, 1995b and 2010).

> It is not epistemological incoherence that vitiates what may be called "subjective foundationalism": it is politics.[…] What the later writings signify for subjective foundationalism is that its discourse is not what it takes itself to be: an ahistorical and politically neutral reflection on the foundation of all thought. (59)

Subjective foundationalism (to use May's terminology) or subjectivism is also questioned by Hegelian phenomenology, according to the reading pursued here. For subjectivism assumes that the objective world lies out there separate from subjectivity, while the subject (i.e. the human mind) is able to provide the foundations of knowledge. However, as shown above, Hegelian phenomenology consists in an immanent critique of the type of knowing that assumes that there is a distinction between the knowing subject and the object known. The self-refutation of consciousness and the model of cognition it implies (viz. the 'correspondence theory of truth') is simultaneously the self-destruction of subjectivism.

A clarification is necessary at this juncture. In saying that for Hegel and Foucault there is no objective reality apart from human experience and activity, I do not mean that Hegel and Foucault denied the existence of the external world. In the case of Hegel, this would mean that the objective world is a product of the human mind (extreme idealism), while in the case of Foucault, it would imply that Foucault denies the existence of the world (irrealism). In my view, both these positions are wrong. What I mean to say is that, from a Hegelian-phenomenological and a Foucauldian-genealogical point of view, it is irrelevant what the world apart from human experience is like. What is relevant is how human beings interact with this world, how they conceptualize it and how they make sense of it. This becomes problematical if – and only if – we accept the foundationalist model of knowledge in terms of correspondence. And, as Prado (2000) has said, the core idea of the 'correspondence theory' is that "the world confers truth on statements …". Consequently, "A true sentence's correspondence to some fact is seen as that fact making the sentence true". This in turn implies that "if the truth-conferring role of the world is denied, the world is denied" (147). As Prado (2000) goes on to say:

> … Foucault is not denying the world […]. To say that objects emerge only in discourse is not to deny the world. It is to say that the things we find in the world are intralinguistic in the sense that what they are for us results from how we conceptualize them, how we *objectify* them.[…] We are intentional entities for whom the world is a collection of particulars of various sorts. But this is not to say … that we manufacture a language-dependent or mind-dependent reality. However real it is, the world is not a collection of *things*, of *objects*. (147–148)

An issue that needs to be addressed here has to do with my claim that Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogy share a non-foundational understanding of knowledge. The question of non-foundationalism or of a knowledge without presuppositions is an intricate one and invites criticism. What troubles critics

in particular is how such a non-foundational knowledge can justify itself.[30] As regards Hegelian phenomenology, it comes to ground itself internally, that is, by presenting itself as an immanent critique of foundationalist thinking.[31] As I have argued above (and as Hegel says in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*), this is the thinking that assumes that there is a distinction between the subject of knowledge and the object known. According to this thinking, truth consists in a near perfect correspondence of subject and object; the validity of this truth is then measured by means of a criterion independent of knowledge. By showing that all attempts to ground knowledge in this way fail on their own terms, Hegel's phenomenology constitutes in effect an immanent critique of the model of knowledge that considers cognition to be based on some presupposition.[32] As Hegel says in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, when science comes on the scene, it merely *appears*; by coming forth, it presents itself as a *phenomenon*. In other words, science occurs; it steps in and asserts itself. As such, it has not actualized itself yet and thus cannot justify itself against "another mode of knowledge". Science must liberate itself from its appearance and it can do so by developing (*PhG*: 66; *PhS*: 48). Therefore, the appearance of science (i.e. Hegelian phenomenology) consists in its identifying step by step what it itself is. Hegelian phenomenology is self-grounding; it is the immanent development of foundational thinking and its model of knowledge (the 'correspondence theory'). Foundationalist thinking collapses internally, as all attempts to ground knowledge in terms of the 'correspondence theory of truth' fail by their own standards. By being an immanent critique of foundationalism and the model of cognition it implies, Hegelian phenomenology shows what philosophical science is not like. It is in this way that the *Phenomenology* is an introduction to the *Science of Logic*.[33] But, as Maker (1994) has pointed out, "to know this is not a presupposition, simply because this negative knowledge is not necessary for science" (93). So far as Foucauldian genealogy is concerned, I think a useful distinction is that drawn by May (1993); this is the distinction between "grounds" and "foundations", "between offering justifications and excluding the possibility of doubt or debate" (11). Accordingly, a "ground" has to do with the way one justifies one's claims, whereas a "foundation" is some ultimate truth that cannot be doubted. The ultimate truths foundationalism takes for granted are, to name just a few, the subject of knowledge, the mind and the soul. But these are notions that Foucault's genealogies question. The issue, then, is to see how Foucault's genealogies justify themselves, without using these or any other truths as foundations (May 1993: 67). According to May (1993), Foucault

30 In respect of Foucauldian genealogy, the question of grounds has been raised by Fraser (1981), Dews (1988: esp. 161–170, 173–176, 180–185, 186–192, 192–199, 214–216, 218–220) and Habermas (1985a and 1994a).

31 See also Winfield (2013).

32 See Maker 1994: 90 quoted above.

33 See Hegel 1998.

> does not have to convince us that his analyses are true in any sense beyond their justifiability […]. All he must show us … is that his analyses can be justified, that we have reason to take them as true pending further inquiry. […] Foucault does not have to offer a foundationalist metanarrative of his genealogical writings; he does, however, have to tell us how we can justify his discourse without one. (71–72)

However, although I find May's distinction between "grounds" and "foundations" helpful, I find his distinction between "justification" and "truth in an ultimate sense" problematical, all the more so as he says that this is a distinction that "Foucault neglected in his epistemic enquiries" (which means that it is a distinction May imports) (May 1993: 71).[34] May's reference to "truth in an ultimate sense" is misleading, since this is precisely what Foucault's genealogy calls into question.[35] All the same, May's distinction between "grounds" and "foundations" suggests – rightly, to my mind – that what we should be asking is whether Foucault's genealogies can justify themselves without relying on foundations. As May (1993) says, justification has two aspects: "the inferential move itself and the status of the claim to which the inferential move appeals in its attempt at justification". The former aspect is logical and consists of "general deductive laws and inductive procedures". It is the latter aspect, "the status of the supporting claim", that differentiates Foucault's understanding of knowledge from foundationalism (90). For foundationalist thinking, there are certain claims that are taken to be ultimate truths. But, from a Foucauldian-genealogical perspective, the truth of a claim is contingent on the place it occupies and on its role within a specific discourse. Foucault's genealogical approach does not justify itself on the basis of some ultimate truth, nor does it claim to be true in an ultimate sense; on the contrary, as we have seen, genealogy acknowledges its interested character, "its system of injustice" (perspectivism) (Foucault 1994b: 150; quoted from Foucault 1984: 90). Its significance lies in that it provided us with an alternative picture or interpretation; Foucault's genealogical histories challenged established history by offering an alternative account. By practising "local" criticism, genealogy allows "an *insurrection of subjugated knowledges* [l' insurrection des « saviors assujettis »]" (Foucault 1994c: 163 and 1980: 81). Foucault was very careful to distinguish between the roles of the "universal" and the "specific" intellectual; whereas the former is concerned with establishing universal norms (in accordance with foundationalist thinking), the latter is preoccupied with providing specific analyses and practising *local* (as opposed to *global*) criticism (Foucault 1994c: 159 and 1980: 132), "… seeing on what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based"

34 May reiterates this distinction when he says "Truth … is a matter of 'the way things are'" (1993: 93).

35 I agree with Prado (2000) when he says that May's distinction "is not a distinction Foucault's work can accommodate" (140).

(Foucault 1994d: 180; quoted from Foucault 2002b: 456), and revealing that "… we are more recent than we thought …" (Foucault 1994b: 182; quoted from Foucault 2002b: 458). Ultimately, what vindicates genealogy is its documentary character and its attention to detail: "Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. […] In short, genealogy demands relentless erudition" (Foucault 1994b: 136; quoted from Foucault 1984: 76–77). The very fact that genealogy is an interpretation – the metaphor "gray" is meant to convey the uncertainty and ambiguity regarding its recording of the past – does not mean that it should not be taken seriously. A genealogical account can be rejected if, and *only* if, another historical account (a genealogy of genealogy) can prove to be more convincing.[36] In fact, perhaps it is wrong to ask the question whether genealogy can, and should, justify itself in advance. Given that its purpose is to disabuse us of the foundations that have underpinned traditional philosophy as well as social and political thought, its value can be judged only retrospectively. Besides, Foucault was quite adamant that "The role of the intellectual is not to tell others what they have to do"; rather, "it is, through the analyses that he carries out in his own field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, to reexamine rules and institutions …" (Foucault 1994d: 676; quoted from Foucault 1990: 265). As Prado (2000) has put it:

> The point … is that the cogency of Foucauldian alternative construals of established truths, institutions, and practices has to do with how enabling or empowering they prove to be. (175)

Therefore, both Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy can be assessed, as well as justify themselves, only in retrospect (*ex post facto*). As shown above, the Hegelian-phenomenological project is self-grounding, but initially it cannot justify itself; by presenting itself as a "science of the experience of consciousness", Hegel's phenomenology does not at first claim to be a superior form of knowledge; its self-justification consists in its development, that is, in the immanent development of the correspondence model of knowledge characteristic of foundationalist thinking. It is only after this model of knowledge has refuted itself that Hegel's phenomenology can both be evaluated and justify itself. Similarly, the worth of a genealogical account can be proven only after it has successfully (or otherwise) enabled us to change our way of thinking:

> … my problem is not to satisfy professional historians; my problem is to construct myself, and to invite others to share an experience of what we are, not only our past but also our present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed. (Foucault 1994d: 44; quoted from Foucault 2002b: 242)

36 For a similar – albeit slightly different argument – see May 1993: 100–101.

What are the implications of Hegel's and Foucault's views on truth and knowledge? The most important lesson that Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy teach us is that truth is not out there awaiting to de discovered; it is not transcendent and it does not exist apart from human experience. As Foucault has famously put it, "Truth is a thing of this world" (1994c: 158; quoted from Foucault 1980: 131). This means that knowledge is interconnected with human activity. What Hegel's phenomenology shows is that humans are always actively engaged with the world; as they interact with objective reality, conscious human beings come to comprehend both their world and their relationship to it in different – increasingly more adequate – ways. Crucially, the phenomenology demonstrates that knowledge is a *social* activity, as all the "shapes of consciousness" (i.e. forms of understanding) prior to "Spirit" presuppose spirit in the sense that spirit is their determining ground. So knowledge is conditioned by spirit, which is intersubjective and self-determining, defined as "'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'" (*PhG*: 140; *PhS*: 110).[37] For its part, what Foucault's genealogy demonstrates is that truth and knowledge are part and parcel of the power relations (and struggles) within a given society, although Foucault was at pains to make clear that they are not reducible to power. For Foucault, the attempt to think of truth/knowledge as *either* distinct from (opposed to) power *or* as determined by power is to yield to "the intellectual and political blackmail of 'being for or against the *Enlightenment*'" (1994d: 573; 2000a: 314).[38] Actually, Foucault insisted that power presupposes resistance and vice versa (1976: 125–127 / 1998: 95–96; see also Foucault 1982: 211–212, 221–222, 225–226). For both Hegel and Foucault, truth is open-ended precisely because it is intertwined with human activity and social-cum-political life. This implies that the philosopher, too, is a product of his own time and, hence, his philosophy is part of the given social and political context in which he finds himself.[39]

I have argued that, despite their many differences, Hegelian phenomenology and Foucauldian genealogy question the conception of knowledge and truth prevalent within the analytic tradition of philosophy and philosophy of social science, namely, the 'correspondence theory of truth'. Moreover, I have attempted to show that the aforementioned model of knowledge is characteristic of foundationalism. For foundationalism, all knowledge rests on certain presuppositions. By casting doubt on the 'correspondence theory', Hegel's phenomenology and Foucault's genealogy alike also query foundationalist thinking and pave the way for a non-foundational knowledge, that is, a knowledge without presuppositions. Both the aforesaid approaches demonstrate that truth is open-ended and that it makes no sense to speak of *the* truth *simpliciter*, because truth and knowledge are inter(linked) to human activity. From a Hegelian-phenomenological and

37 My reading here owes much to Rose (1981) and Hutchings (2003: esp. 32–44).

38 My translation.

39 For the politics of Hegel's and Foucault's philosophy see Hutchings (1999: 93–117).

Foucauldian-genealogical standpoint, it does not matter what objective reality (truth) apart from human experience and activity is alike; rather, what matters is how humans interact with the world, conceptualize it and make sense of it.

'Thick' and 'Thin' Accounts

Foucault's account of political community and the self is 'thin', compared with the 'thick' accounts offered by thinkers such as Plato (2000 and 2003), Aristotle (1894/1942, 1957, 1976 and 1988), Hegel (1967 and 1995), and communitarians such as Sandel (1982 and 1984), Taylor (1979, 1993/1977, 1992) and MacIntyre (1985).[40] Foucault conceives of the political community in terms of networks of power. Power is understood as the complex configuration of forces or strategic situation which obtains in every society. Power's main characteristics then are as follows: power is not a stable position or condition, it cannot be acquired or seized but only exercised from a multiplicity of points within a network of relations; power relations are immanent in other kinds of relations; power comes from below, there is no permanent relation of dominators and dominated; albeit purposeful, relations of power are not the result of the choices or actions of particular actors; and wherever there is power, there is resistance (Foucault 1998: 92–96). Foucault acknowledges that here "nominalism" becomes "a methodological necessity": "One needs a name for this thing … . It is called 'power' because that is the closest one can get to it. This sort of proximate naming can be called catachrestic" (Spivak 1992: 150).[41] In contradistinction to the juridical understanding of power, Foucault (1982) emphasizes that "power is not a function of consent … a renunciation of freedom, a transference of rights …"; nor does it involve violence (219–220). Consent and violence may well be "the instruments or the results" of power, but not its defining characteristics. Rather, "what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions …" (220). Specifically, for a power relationship to obtain, there are two prerequisites: "that 'the other' … be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole

40 By criticizing Rawls's theory of justice as fairness in detail, Sandel initiated what came to be known as 'the liberal-communitarian debate' (see Sandel 1982; 1984). Most famously, communitarians have charged liberals with an incoherent account of the self. The literature on the liberal-communitarian debate is huge. Some useful studies are, among others, the following: Avineri and de-Shalit (1992); Buchanan (1989); Caney (1992), together with Mulhall and Swift (1993) and Caney (1993); Cochran (1989); Mulhall and Swift (1992). See also Kymlicka (1989) and Benhabib (1992: ch. 5). On MacIntyre's work see J. Horton and S. Mendus (1994). Recently, Olssen (2009) re-examined the liberal-communitarian debate, looking into the inadequacies of both liberalism and communitarianism, in order to put forth a theory of "'thin' communitarianism". For a review of Olssen (2009) see Sembou (2012b).

41 Spivak also cites Foucault (1998: 93). Cf. "'Power' … a catachresis …" (Spivak 1992: 153).

field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up" (220). In his later work Foucault elucidates the nature of power relations by means of the term "conduct", which means both "to 'lead' others' and "a way of behaving within a more or less open field of possibilities" (220–221). A genealogical enquiry shows that "government" was initially used to designate "the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed …". In this broad sense, "to govern" means "to structure the possible field of action of others". This re-conceptualization of power in terms of "government" or "governmentality" leads to a rethinking of the relationship between power and freedom: "Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free" (221). The power-freedom relationship is one of "agonism", in which the one incites the other (222). Foucault's conception of the self is "thin", as, for him, the self is not fixed. Rather, as shown in Chapter 3 above, subjects are constituted in discourses (Foucault 1975, 1976, 1991, 1998; see also 1982: 208–216).

By contrast, for Aristotle and Hegel, human beings are from birth *already* situated *within* a given political community and can lead their lives only within it: « … ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον, καὶ ὁ ἄπολις διὰ φύσιν καὶ οὐ διὰ τύχην ἤτοι φαῦλός ἐστιν, ἢ κρείττων ἢ ἄνθρωπος … ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός ».[42] (Aristotle 1957: 1253a). They are embedded in specific social practices and depend on the institutional framework of the particular historical community in which they find themselves and which 'cultivates' or 'educates' them (the Hegelian word is *bilden*), as well as shaping their identity and lives. Alasdair MacIntyre (1985) and Charles Taylor (1992) accused liberalism of *presupposing* an incoherent conception of the person (or the "self"). This does not only mean to say that the liberal understanding of the self is undesirable, but – more significantly – that it is *ontologically* false. Related to this issue is MacIntyre's criticism of the "Enlightenment project" and the "predicament of modern morality" ("emotivism") (MacIntyre 1985: 1–78). MacIntyre's stance towards modernity is, however, more critical than Taylor's. Moreover, both thinkers have argued that liberalism *mis*represents and *under*estimates the importance of community to the identity and integrity of the human being. In putting forward this view, MacIntyre is influenced by Aristotle, while Taylor is mostly influenced by Hegel. Further, both MacIntyre and Taylor have argued that liberal political philosophy and practice is, actually, far less committed to neutrality between competing conceptions of the good life for human beings than what it claims to be the case. MacIntyre (1985) has maintained that the different conceptually incommensurable assumptions of the opposing arguments expressed in moral debates have a *wide variety of historical origins*. In other words, the different concepts that we use in our moral discourses were originally a part of larger theoretical schemes in which they had a function to perform by contexts of which they have now been deprived. Crucially, the meaning of these concepts

42 "… the human being is by nature a political animal [i.e. destined to live in the *polis*], and the *a*political [he who lives without a *polis*] by nature and not due to bad luck is either immoral, or more than human … either a beast or God" (My translation).

has also changed over the centuries. One such concept is offered, for instance, in Chapter 17 of *After Virtue*, where MacIntyre discusses the theories of justice propounded by Rawls and Nozick; both the aforementioned theories imply the notion of "desert",[43] which has changed meaning in modern times. MacIntyre wants to remind us that the concept of "desert" occupied a specific place in the Aristotelian understanding of "distributive justice". According to Aristotle (1894/ 1942), the task of "distributive justice" was to give "each citizen his due". Distribution of resources and political office was on the basis of "desert" (κατ' ἀξίαν) (1131a). Justice necessitated the existence of two persons and two things (to be allocated); distribution was to occur in a ratio C:D equal to the ratio of "desert" between citizens A and B between whom the things (or goods) were to be allocated (1131b). But to understand the demands of distributive justice for any political society, one has to understand what kind of political society it is; in Aristotelian terms, one must look to the *telos* of the *polis*. Obviously, acknowledged that the *telos* of the city-state (or *polis*) was subject to different interpretations depending on one's political persuasion. Therefore, oligarchs, democrats and aristocrats had differing views as regards the *telos* of the political association and thereby a different conception of "desert" (Aristotle 1894/1942: 1131a and 1957: 1280a). Significantly, the concepts of "desert" and "justice" were part of a *teleological theory*, which in modernity was discredited. According to MacIntyre (1985), it is wrong to use concepts such as these, since they have no place in contemporary moral vocabulary. The use of concepts that are deprived of their teleological context leads us to the order of disorder which is characteristic of – what MacIntyre (1985) has termed – our *emotivist* culture (23–35). What does "emotivism" consist in?

> Emotivism is the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character. (MacIntyre 1985: 11–12)

According to MacIntyre (1985), "emotivism" was the dominant school of moral philosophy in modern times. What is important, the emotivist school of thought has held that there is a distinction to be made between "facts" and "values":

> *Factual judgments* are true or false; and in the realm of fact there are rational criteria by means of which we may secure agreement as to what is true and what is false. But *moral judgments*, being expressions of attitude or feeling, are

43 This notion is not *explicitly* used by Rawls and Nozick. However, it is *implied* in their theories, insofar as these are philosophical formulations of the analogous positions which people adopt in everyday in everyday political discussions in liberal democratic polities (represented here by A and B).

> neither true or false; and agreement in moral judgment is not to be secured by any rational method, for there are none. (MacIntyre 1985: 12)[44]

For MacIntyre (1985), what is worrisome is that a *moral philosophy presupposes a sociology*. Not only does emotivism fail to distinguish between "personal" and "impersonal" reasons in justifying a moral position; it also fails to make the distinction between *manipulative* and *non-manipulative* interpersonal relations (MacIntyre 1985: 23–35). MacIntyre's worry is *instrumental* social relationships. Since citizens cannot agree on basic moral issues, there is a need for a set of institutional arrangements to arbitrate between different moral positions and thereby *impose* a unity that is otherwise non-existent. This unity, however, can*not* be a moral community but only "a bureaucratized unity" (MacIntyre 1985: 254). The remedy MacIntyre (1985) proposed was the recovery of the tradition of the virtues. So MacIntyre (1985) was altogether pessimistic as regards our contemporary condition (see "a disquieting suggestion", 1–5). For MacIntyre (1985), the failure of the "Enlightenment project" was due to the Enlightenment philosophers' use of concepts *outwith their teleological context*. The moral scheme that forms the historical background to Enlightenment thought had "a structure which required three elements: untutored human nature, man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-*telos* and the moral precepts which enable him to pass from one state to another" (54). In Aristotelian terms, every human being has the "potentiality" (*dynamis*) to achieve their "actuality" or *entelecheia* (ἐντελέχεια). *Entelecheia* is actually a compound of three words, namely, *en-telos-echein*, and literally means that one's *telos* or purpose exists within the human being, initially as a potentiality capable of realization. In this sense, *entelecheia* constitutes the concrete reality of humans. On MacIntyre's reading of Aristotle, ethics is the science that enables humans to pass from the state of man-as-he-happens-to-be (i.e. untutored human nature) to their true end, that is, "man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-*telos*" (MacIntyre 1985: 54). Human beings, like the members of all other species, have a *specific* nature which is such that they have certain aims to achieve, viz. a certain *telos*. Accordingly, the good for humans is defined in terms of their specific nature and purpose.

> What then does the good for man turn out to be? Aristotle … gives it to the name of *eudaimonia* – as so often there is a difficulty in translation: blessedness, happiness, prosperity. It is the state of being well and doing well in being well, of a man's being well-favored himself and in relation to the divine. (MacIntyre 1985: 148)

MacIntyre's proposed remedy to contemporary moral and political philosophy is the re-introduction of the concept of a *telos*. A *teleological* theory can be brought about by rejecting the abstract "emotivist" self, and regarding the person as

44 My italics for emphasis.

necessarily embedded within – and defined by – his or her social, cultural and historical circumstances. MacIntyre, therefore, has attempted to re-construct – rather than simply transplant to contemporary society – Aristotle's account of ethical life, because: firstly, Aristotle's theory of the human *telos* was dependent upon a metaphysical biology that has been discredited by the Enlightenment;[45] secondly, Aristotle placed great emphasis on the constitutive role of the *polis*, but the Athenian city-state was an historically and culturally specific form of life that cannot possibly be reproduced. MacIntyre introduced the three notions of "practice", "narrative order" and "moral tradition".

> By a practice I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (MacIntyre 1985: 187)

The above definition of "practice" is both very complicated and vague; for MacIntyre says that "the range of practices is wide: arts, sciences, games, politics in the Aristotelian sense, the making and sustaining of family life, all fall under the same concept" (MacIntyre 1985: 188). What is important is that participation in such practices implies the acceptance of their standards/rules and way of life. And it is only by engaging in a particular "practice" that one can enjoy that practice's "internal goods". These "internal goods" are opposed to the same practice's "external goods"; for, although the latter can also be derived from participating in the given "practice", they can be derived from engaging in other "practices" as well. For MacIntyre (1985), the "self" is constituted by a "practice" or set of "practices" in which he or she is a participant. Of course, it is possible for a person to participate in a number of "practices" simultaneously with the possibility of conflict, as different "practices" are likely to impose different – even incompatible – demands upon the same individual. One may have to give priority to one "practice" and they will do so by looking at their longer-term goals or intentions, namely, their life-story. And, if one is to make sense of these intentions, they have to relate them to the "setting" of my present activities:

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45 In relation to this point, Taylor (1994b) has commented: "MacIntyre mentions the dependence of Aristotle's ethical views on his 'metaphysical biology'. But this is not so. The notion that human beings have something like a telos *qua* human can be separated from the thesis that everything in nature belongs to some class or other, whose behaviour is explained by some Form or Idea. Because we no longer explain the movements of stars and stones teleologically does not mean to say that we cannot explain humans in these terms" (17).

> I use the word 'setting' here as a relatively inclusive term. A social setting may be an institution, it may be what I have called a practice, or it may be a milieu of some other human kind. But it is central to the notion of a setting … that a setting has a history, a history within which the histories of individual agents not only are, but have to be, situated, just because without the setting and its changes through time the history of the individual agent and his changes through time will be unintelligible. Of course one and the same piece of behaviour may belong to more than one setting. (MacIntyre 1985: 206–207)

Further, in viewing one's life in its *narrative form*, one will have to ask how they should best lead their life, which presupposes a particular conception of the 'good life': "The unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest", i.e. a quest for *the* good. As MacIntyre (1985) says:

> A quest is always an education both as to the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge". The "virtues" are those excellences that will not only enable us to achieve the "internal goods" of "practices" but which will also help us in our "guest" for the good (219).

However,

> we are never more (and sometimes less) than the co-authors of our own narratives. Only in fantasy do we live what story we please. In life … we are always under certain constraints. We enter upon a stage which we did not design and we find ourselves part of an action that was not of our making. Each of us being a main character in his own drama plays subordinate parts in the dramas of others, and each drama constrains the others. (213)

Put differently, we lead our lives not individually but in relation to others. It follows that we share a certain conception of the future (*telos*) towards which we are heading. However, the future is not always transparent to us: "Thus the narratives which we live out have both an unpredictable and a partially teleological character" (216).

This is where the importance of MacIntyre's concept of "tradition" lies:

> What the good life is for a fifth-century Athenian general will not be the same as what it was for a medieval nun or a seventeenth-century farmer. But it is not just that different individuals live in different social circumstances; it is also that we all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone's daughter, someone else's cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, this tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be the good for one who inhabits these roles … These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting-point. This is in part what gives my life its own moral particularity. (220)

The notion of "tradition" suggests that the quest for the good life cannot be the same for all people. Each one of us is defined by his or her historical and social specificity. The 'traditions' of which we are part are religious, moral, economic, political, aesthetic or geographical. In a healthy tradition common goals are subject to continuous debate (MacIntyre 1985: 222). As Mason (1994) has noted:

> Either he [MacIntyre] has to acknowledge that one tradition may contain a plurality of incommensurable theories, each with its own conception of justice and governed by its own norms of rational enquiry; or he has to accept that the same tradition may include quite different conceptions of justice which, even though they are commensurable, give rise to disagreement which is sometimes as intractable as when it occurs between adherents to different traditions. (228)

Given MacIntyre's criticism of liberalism in *After Virtue* – where liberalism was opposed to MacIntyre's scheme – it is indeed surprising to find out that in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre accorded liberalism the status of a "tradition" (MacIntyre 1988: 326–348).

Charles Taylor, by contrast, has been far more optimistic as regards the nature of liberal democratic societies. For him, MacIntyre "tends to take modern society at the face value of its own dominant theories, as heading for runaway atomism and break-up". But the question that Taylor poses is whether contemporary moral theories can be taken at face value at all. It would seem that MacIntyre was wrong for, in reality, "we are far more 'Aristotelian' than we allow"; "hence our practice is in some significant way less based on pure disengaged freedom and atomism than we realize" (Taylor 1994: 22). In other words, Taylor maintains that the conceptualization of the modern liberal culture is wrong:

> Seeing ourselves as atoms, for instance, distorts and inhibits the practices which embed the contrary understanding. This is notably the case for the practices of citizen participation in contemporary society. But these practices nevertheless survive. Our way of life never sinks to the full horror that would attend it (I believe) if we could be truly Benthamites … (Taylor 1994: 23)

One of the most basic mistakes is our confusion of – what Taylor has called – "ontological issues" and "advocacy issues". "Ontological" issues "concern what you recognize as factors you will invoke to account for social life", while "advocacy" issues "concern the moral stand or policy one adopts" (Taylor 1989: 159). According to Taylor (1989), "ontological" questions divide "atomists" from "holists", whereas "advocacy" questions separate "individualists" from "collectivists". What is crucial in this argument is that either stand on the atomism-holism divide can be combined with either stand on the individualist-collectivist debate. What this suggests is that there can be both "atomist collectivists" (i.e. people who, on the ontological level, give priority to the individual person as opposed to the community, whereas, on the policy level, give priority to the good

of collectivities) and "holist individualists" (people who, on the ontological level, emphasize the importance of the community in the shaping of human identity, while, on the policy level, give primacy to individual rights and freedom). What the above considerations are meant to illustrate is that political philosophy is wrong to assume that "subjectivity" leads to "mere subjectivism" or "emotivism" (as MacIntyre,1985, argued). As Taylor (1989) showed, liberal ontology *pre*supposes an idea of the human good and hence stresses the importance of communal life to the identity of the "self". It is only on the policy level that liberalism invokes human rights and the liberty of the individual. As he says at the beginning of *Sources of the Self*:

> I want to explore various facets of what I will call the 'modern identity'. To give a good first approximation of what this means would be to say that it involves tracing various strands of our modern notion of what it is to be a human agent, a person, or a self. But pursuing this investigation soon shows that you can't get very clear about this without some further understanding of how our pictures of the good have evolved. *Selfhood* and the *good*, or in another way selfhood and morality, turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes. (Taylor 1992: 3)

He went on to articulate the "'background picture' lying behind our moral and spiritual intuitions" (Taylor 1992: 8). This "could only be carried forward by showing that one or another ontology is in fact the only adequate basis for our moral responses, whether we recognize this or not" (Taylor 1992: 10). Taylor challenged a view of human agency according to which action can be understood solely in terms of agents' preferences and of their efforts to satisfy these preferences: "On one side, they [our moral intuitions] are almost like instincts". He wants to propose a model which emphasizes agents' second-order reflection upon such preferences ("on the other side, they seem to involve claims, implicit or explicit, about the nature and status of human beings"), as well as the evaluative frameworks which make such second-order reasoning possible ("From this second side, a moral reaction is an assent to, an affirmation of, a given ontology of the human") (Taylor 1992: 5). Where MacIntyre is critical of "emotivism", Taylor is critical of "naturalism": "An important strand of modern naturalist consciousness has strived to hive this second side off and declare it dispensable or irrelevant to morality" (Taylor 1992: 5). His exploration into time in Part II of the aforesaid work is designed to show that the modern conception of subjectivity is rooted in certain ideas of the human good. He demonstrates that the turn "inward" from the seventeenth century onwards is the result of our efforts to define this human good.

For Taylor, human beings move into "moral spaces" (Taylor 1992: 25–52). The indispensability of a "moral space" for the "self" is due to its "ontological solidity". The answers or "framework-definitions" that we give to the questions that arise while we move in a "moral space" are essentially communal in nature; more significantly, they can be established and maintained *only* through membership in

a language community (this is, clearly, a Wittgensteinian influence).[46] As Taylor (1992) has put it: "A language only exists and is maintained within a language community" (35). For Wittgenstein, language expresses the interchange of ideas which are part of the social practices of which a specific community consists. Therefore, it is the traditions, practices and contexts which words describe that we should be looking at in order to make sense of reality and the nature of the "self". I have become what I am thanks to my conversation with other selves who are responsible for my self-definition. One's identity consists – at least partly – of my friendship or ties with other people.

> This is the sense in which one cannot be a self on one's own. I am a self in relation to certain interlocutors … A self exists only within what I call 'webs of interlocution'. (36)

If human beings are self-interpreting animals, and the linguistic and experiential resources for such self-interpretations are only to be found in the context of a community of other selves, then community is a structural precondition of human agency and selfhood. Therefore, according to Taylor, liberalism's self-interpretation is inadequate. Taylor (1992) has argued that it is important for liberals to realize the "frameworks" within which they live:

> … doing without frameworks is utterly impossible for us … stepping outside these limits would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognize as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood. (27)

Indeed, a lack of "frameworks" may lead to an "identity crisis". For "To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand" (27) Like MacIntyre, Taylor (1992) has argued that the human agent has a "narrative unity":

> Thus making sense of my present action, when we are not dealing with such trivial questions as where I shall go in the next five minutes but with the issue of my place relative to the good, requires a narrative understanding of my life, a sense of what I have become which can only be given in a story. And as I project my life forward and endorse the existing direction or give it a new one, I project a future story, not just a state of the momentary future but a bent for my whole life to come. This sense of my life as having a direction towards what I am not yet is what Alasdair MacIntyre captures in his notion quoted above that life is seen as a 'quest'. (48)

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46 The epistemological basis of Taylor's moral and political theory can best be seen in connection with Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language and mind. See e.g. Plant (1991: 330–343).

According to Taylor (1992), one's orientation towards the "good" also requires a *sense* of where one's stands *in relation to* the good. Taylor's conception of the "good" is rather Platonic, that is, a "moral source" that enjoys one's "love" and "respect". As "moral source", it draws one closer to its nature (Plato's *methexis* metaphor) (92–95). Of course, one's orientation may turn out to be wrong: this "concerns not how near or far we are from what we see as the good, but rather the direction of our lives, towards or away from it" (45).

Chapter 5
Hegel, Foucault and the Philosophy of Social Sciences

> It is … *Hegel* who testifies to the dialectical element in experience … . He conceives experience as skepticism in action. (Gadamer 2013: 362)

> Heidegger has pointed out, rightly in my opinion, that here Hegel is not interpreting experience dialectically but rather conceiving what is dialectical in terms of the nature of experience … . Hegel's dialectical description of experience has some truth. (Gadamer 2013: 363)

> The maieutic productivity of the Socratic dialogue, the art of using words as a midwife, is certainly directed toward the people who are the partners in the dialogue, but it is concerned merely with the opinions they express, the immanent logic of the subject matter that is unfolded in the dialogue … . in dialogue spoken language – in the process of question and answer, giving and taking, talking at cross purposes and seeing each other's point – performs the communication of meaning that, with respect to the written tradition, is the *task of hermeneutics*.Hence it is more than a metaphor; it is a memory of what originally was the case, to describe the task of hermeneutics as entering into dialogue with the text. (Gadamer 2013: 376)[1]

An hermeneutical reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is offered by Hans-Georg Gadamer in his famous *Hegels Dialektik: Fünf Hermeneutische Studien*, published by Mohr in 1971. As Maker has put it:

> … of all contemporary thinkers who take Hegel seriously and yet critical of him, Gadamer is the most sensitive and appreciative, the most alert to Hegel's nuances and the most willing to acknowledge both the importance of Hegel's influence and the continuing challenge which Hegel presents to his own philosophical position. (1994: 148)

The "positive aspects" of Hegel's philosophy, for Gadamer, are, first, the critique of "egological subjectivity", second, his "emphasis on history" and, third, the

1 My italics.

"development of 'spirit' as a notion which transcends subjectivity and which points towards the phenomenon of language" (Maker 1994: 156).[2]

Where, for Hegel, the most important notion is "spirit", for Gadamer, is "tradition". For him, "Hermeneutical experience is concerned with *tradition*. This is what is to be experienced" (Gadamer 2013: 366). As Gadamer has put it in one of his most famous essays:

> What I am describing is the mode of the whole human experience of the world. I call this experience hermeneutical, for the process we are describing is repeated continually throughout our familiar experience. There is a world already interpreted, already organized in its basic relations, into which experience steps as something new, upsetting what has led our expectations and undergoing reorganization itself in the upheaval. (1966a: 15)

"Tradition" is "language",[3] that is, "it expresses itself like a 'Thou'". In other words, "tradition is a genuine partner in dialogue, and we belong to it, as does the I with a Thou" (Gadamer 2013: 366); "I may say 'though' and I may refer to myself over against a thou, but a common understanding [*Verständigung*] always precedes these situations. We all know that to say 'thou' to someone presupposes a deep common accord [*tiefes Einverständnis*]" (Gadamer 1966a: 7). There are two modes of experience and understanding of the 'Thou'. The first is what we term "knowledge of human nature"; the second is the mode which acknowledges the 'Thou' "as a person", but "the understanding of the Thou is still a form of *self-relatedness*".[4] This is because of "the dialectic of the I-Thou relation". According to Gadamer, "This relation is not immediate but reflective. To every claim there is a counterclaim". For this reason "it is possible for each of the partners in the relationship reflectively to outdo the other" (Gadamer 2013: 366–367). Each claim and counter-claim "is co-opted and pre-empted reflectively from the standpoint of the other person". Precisely because "it is a *mutual relationship*, it helps to constitute the reality of the I-Thou relationship itself" (Gadamer 2013: 367).[5] This "dialectic of reciprocity" involved in the 'I-Thou' relationship is hidden from the consciousness of the person. In the "hermeneutical sphere" the parallel to the aforesaid experience of the 'Thou' is what Gadamer calls "*historical consciousness*" (Gadamer 2013: 368). As persons already stand within a "tradition" right from birth, the tradition does not limit their knowledge, but makes it possible (Gadamer 2013: 369). That is to say, tradition defines one's "horizon". In Gadamer's words, "The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (Gadamer 2013: 313). Yet "the criteria of the historian's [our] own knowledge can never be called into question by tradition" (Gadamer

2 On Hegel's influence on Gadamer see also Linge (1977: xxxix–xl).
3 On language see also Gadamer (1966b and 1972).
4 My italics for emphasis.
5 My italics for emphasis.

2013: 370).[6] An 'horizon', for Gadamer, consists in the background assumptions – moral, cultural and epistemological – who define one's "situation".[7] Gadamer terms these background assumptions "prejudices".

> A person who believes he is free of prejudices, relying on the objectivity of his procedures and denying that he is himself conditioned by historical circumstances, experiences the power of the prejudices that unconsciously dominate him as a vis a tergo. A person who does not admit that he is dominated by prejudices will fail to see what manifests itself by their light. (Gadamer 2013: 369)[8]

For this reason, says Gadamer (2013), "… in tradition there is always an element of freedom and of history itself" (293). This means that one "must allow tradition's claim to validity … in such a way that it has something to say" to them. "This too calls for a fundamental sort of openness". The openness to tradition "has a real analogue in the I's experience of the Thou": "Without such openness to one another there is no genuine human bond" (Gadamer 2013: 369). As already mentioned, for Gadamer, understanding "is language-bound". A common language and hence a "common understanding" enables us to broaden "our own experience of the world" (Gadamer 1966a: 15). In their interrelationships humans are each "a kind of linguistic circle"; "… these linguistic circles come into contact with each other, merging more and more" (Gadamer 1966a: 17). These dialogues – the linguistic exchanges between individuals – constitute the primary dimension of hermeneutics. Albeit not the primary task of hermeneutics, a "specific task" thereof is "misunderstanding" (1966a: 15).[9] As Gadamer says elsewhere:

> Philosophical hermeneutics takes as its task the opening up of the hermeneutical dimension in its full scope, showing its fundamental significance for our entire understanding of the world and thus for all the various forms in which this understanding manifests itself: from interhuman communication to manipulation of society; from personal experience by the individual in society to the way in which he encounters society; and from the tradition as it is built of religion and

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6 My square brackets. For Gadamer, historical circumstances condition human understanding: "What distinguishes the process of refining hermeneutic practice from acquiring a mere technique, whether it is called social technology or critical method, is that *in hermeneutics history co-determines the consciousness of the person who understands*". (Gadamer 2013: 592; my italics for emphasis).

7 "We define the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision" (Gadamer 2013: 313).

8 See Gadamer (2013), ch. 4, section, entitled "Prejudices as conditions of understanding", 289ff.

9 See "Schleiermacher defined hermeneutics as the art of avoiding misunderstanding". However: "Is it not, in fact, the case that every misunderstanding presupposes a 'deep common accord'?" (Gadamer 1966a: 7).

> law, art and philosophy, to the revolutionary consciousness that unhinges the tradition through emancipatory reflection. (1967: 18)

Despite the fact that individuals are born within a specific political community – "tradition" – and share a common language, says Gadamer, "there is absolutely no captivity within a language – not even within our native language". Gadamer does not believe in any sort of "linguistic relativism". We all learn foreign languages: "To master the foreign language means precisely that when we engage in speaking in the foreign land, we do not constantly consult inwardly our own world and its vocabulary" (1966a: 15–16; quotes 16). At the same time, even our native language is "infinite"; languages themselves expand. Moreover, everything one says "is … opened into the infinite realm of expressions" (Gadamer 1966a: 16).

Importantly, for Gadamer, for humans their horizons are never closed.

> The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never absolutely bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. (Gadamer 2013: 315)

Given that individuals are already situated within a given "tradition" and hence "horizon", how do they come to criticize their "prejudices"?[10] Gadamer (2013) says: "An important part of this testing occurs in encountering the past and in understanding the tradition from which we come. Hence the horizon of the present cannot be formed without the past". More precisely: "*... understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves*" (317). Critical reflection on one's tradition is possible because "historical consciousness" "is aware of its own otherness and hence foregrounds the horizon of the past from its own".

> On the other hand, it is itself … only something superimposed upon continuing tradition, and hence it immediately recombines with what it has foregrounded itself from in order to become one with itself again in the unity of the historical horizon that it thus acquires. (Gadamer 2013: 317)

It is the task of the "historically effected consciousness" („*wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewußtsein"*) to describe the act of the "fusion of horizons" (Gadamer 2013: 317). For Gadamer,

10 Cf. "This is the point at which the attempt to critique historical hermeneutics has to start. The overcoming of all prejudices, this global demand of the Enlightenment, will itself prove to be a prejudice, and removing it opens the way to an appropriate understanding of the finitude which dominates not only our humanity but also our historical consciousness" (Gadamer 2013: 288).

> Consciousness of being affected by history (wirkungsgeschichitliches Bewußtsein) is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*. To acquire an awareness of a situation is, however, always a task of peculiar difficulty. The very idea of a situation means that we are not standing outside and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge of it. (2013: 312)

Gadamer looked into the interdependence of "rhetoric", "hermeneutics" and "sociology" regarding "the universalities that run through all three" (Gadamer 1967: 20; see also Gadamer 1985). Obviously, all three have a relationship to "praxis" (Gadamer 1967: 20). "Rhetoric" is concerned with "the impact of *speaking* in all its immediacy" and is interested in the "effect" on the audience (Gadamer 1967: 23). "Hermeneutics" can be defined as the "art of understanding". Both "rhetoric" and "hermeneutics" have their roots in classical Greece, where "one could distinguish between the practice of the Sophists and a Socratic hermeneutics" (Gadamer 1985: 277).[11] As Gadamer says:

> Even so, that is far from being a *theory* of understanding; and indeed it seems to be generally characteristic for the emergence of the hermeneutical problem as such that a situation must exist where something remote has to be brought nearer, a strangeness overcome, a bridge built between "once" and "now". Accordingly, the hour appointed to a theory of understanding arrived with the modern period, which had become conscious of its distance from antiquity. Something of that consciousness was already present in the theological claims brought forward by Protestant biblical exegesis and its principle of *sola scriptura*, but its true development took place as historical consciousness matured during the Enlightenment and the Romantic period and so established a broken relationship with tradition. (Gadamer 1985: 277–278)

The orators were trained to excite the emotions of the public with their speech. By contrast, "the excitation of the emotions … has only the most shadowy kind of role to play in the written expressions which become the object of hermeneutical endeavor" (Gadamer 1985: 279). In a written text the intention of the writer, his or her mood is not only remote, but does not constitute the object of study: rather, "the act of grasping the sense of the text takes on the character of autonomous production" (Gadamer 1985: 278). In *Truth and Method* Gadamer defines the "task of hermeneutics as entering into a dialogue with the text" (2013: 376). Crucially,

> We recall the *hermeneutical rule* that we must understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole. This principle stems from ancient rhetoric, and modern hermeneutics has transferred it to the art of understanding. It is a *circular relationship* in both cases. The anticipation of *meaning* in which

11 Gadamer refers to Hermann Gundert's work here. With respect to Socratic hermeneutics see also Gadamer 2013: 370–378.

> the whole is envisaged becomes actual understanding when the parts that are determined by the whole themselves also determine this whole. (Gadamer 2013: 302)[12]

Therefore, "the movement of understanding is constantly from the whole to the part and back to the whole. Our task is to expand the unity of the understood meaning centrifugally" (Gadamer 2013: 302).

According to Gadamer, both "rhetoric" and "hermeneutics" perform a significant function within social life (Gadamer 1985: 279).[13] At the same time, "the rhetorical and the hermeneutical aspects of human linguisticality interpenetrate each other at every point" (Gadamer 1985: 280). Importantly:

> There would be no speaker and no such thing as rhetoric if understanding and agreement were not the lifeblood of human relationships. There would be no hermeneutical task if there were no loss of agreement between the parties to a "conversation" and no need to seek understanding. The connection between hermeneutics and rhetoric ought to serve, then, to dispel the notion that hermeneutics is somehow restricted to the aesthetic-humanistic tradition alone and that hermeneutical philosophy has to do with a "life of the mind" which is somehow opposed to the world of "real" life and propagates itself only in and through the "cultural tradition". (Gadamer 1985: 280)

Elsewhere he has said that "there would be no hermeneutical task if there were no mutual understanding that has been disturbed and that those involved in a conversation must search for and find again together". It was a predicament of Gadamer's time – including ours' – that

> failure to realize the foregoing and "evidence of the increasing self-alienation of human life" that humans thought "in terms of organizing a perfect and perfectly

12 My italics for emphasis. Cf. Hegel: "True" is "… the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its becoming" (*PhG*: 20, *PhS*: 10). See Chapter 2 above. See also: "This is one way of trying to express what has been called the 'hermeneutical circle'. What we are trying to establish is a certain reading of text or expressions, and what we appeal to as our grounds for this reading can only be other readings. The circle can also be put in terms of part-whole relations: we are trying to establish a reading for the whole text, and for this we appeal to readings of its partial expressions; and yet because we are dealing with meaning, with making sense, where expressions only make sense or not in relation to others, the readings of partial expressions depend on those of others, and ultimately of the whole" (Taylor 1994a: 183). Cf. "If we have a science that has no brute data, that relies on readings, then it cannot but move in a *hermeneutical circle*". (Taylor 1994a: 206; my italics for emphasis). For Taylor's work on Hegel see Taylor 1993/1977 and 1979.

13 Cf. Gadamer (2013: 592–593); "I would like to see more recognition of the fact that this is the realm hermeneutics shares with rhetoric: the realm of arguments that are convincing …" Gadamer (2013: 592).

> manipulated information – a turn modern rhetoric has taken". In this case, he argues, "the sense of mutual interpenetration of rhetoric and hermeneutics fades away and hermeneutics is on its own". (Gadamer 1967: 25–26)

Gadamer has said that "the *Geisteswissenschaften* were the starting point" of his "analysis in *Truth and Method* precisely because they related to experiences that have nothing to do with method and science but lie beyond science – like the experience of art and the experience of culture that bears the imprint of its historical tradition" (Gadamer 1967: 26).[14]

So his own work went back to "Dilthey's philosophical development of the heritage of German romanticism" (Gadamer 1967: 18). However:

> Unlike the essentially reconstructive hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, which took the language of the text as a cipher for something lying *behind* the text (e.g., the creative personality of the worldview of the author), Gadamer focuses his attention squarely on the subject matter of the text itself, that is, on what it says to successive generations of interpreters. (Linge 1977: xx)

Jürgen Habermas drew on Gadamer's analysis of the *wirkungsgeschichte Bewußtein* and his "model of translation" in his *Truth and Method* "with the hope that they could help to overcome the positivistic ossification of sociological logic and move sociological theory beyond its historical failure to reflect upon its linguistic foundations". Therefore, "Habermas's use of hermeneutics stands on the premise that it shall serve the methodology of the social sciences" (Gadamer 1967: 26).[15]

According to Habermas, "Hermeneutics refers to a 'capability' which we acquire to the extent that we come to 'master' a natural language – with the art of understanding the meaning of linguistic communication and, in the case of disrupted communication, of making it understandable". For him, "philosophical hermeneutics" is not exactly the same thing; "it is not an art but a critique", that is to say, "it brings to consciousness in a reflective attitude experiences which we have of language in the exercise of our *communicative competence* and thus in the course of *social interaction* with others through language (1985b: 294).[16] On Habermas's view,

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14 For the human vs. the natural sciences see also Gadamer 2013: 293–296, 296–302, 355–370.

15 The background of the Gadamer/Habermas debate was the "*Positivismusstreit*" of the 1950s (see Adorno et al 1976). For Habermas on Dilthey see Habermas (1987: 140–160). On hermeneutics and the social sciences see also Habermas (1988), as well as Habermas (1971b). On the Gadamer/Habermas see also Gadamer (2013: 591–592). Cf. "Both Apel and Habermas seem to me to fixate on the idealist conception of understanding, which does not correspond to the whole movement of my analysis. It is not by accident that I oriented my investigation toward the experience of art, whose 'meaning' cannot be exhausted by conceptual understanding" Gadamer (2013: 596).

16 My italics for emphasis.

Gadamer is far too faithful in tradition. "Experience with systematically distorted communication" militates against Gadamer's view that there is no distinction between "authority" and "reason". Following Weber, Habermas maintains that "authority" is often legitimated through "the objective illusion of freedom from force" (Habermas 1985b: 315–316). Further, "we have good reason to suspect that the background consensus of established traditions and language games can be a consciousness forged of compulsion, a result of *pseudocommunication*, not only in the pathologically isolated case of disturbed familial systems, but in entire social systems as well" (Habermas 1985b: 317). Therefore:

> Unlike simple hermeneutical understanding, *depth*-hermeneutics, which clarifies the specific unintelligibility of systematically distorted communication, can no longer be grasped, strictly speaking, in terms of the model of translation. (Gadamer 1985b: 310)[17]

In so far as tradition is transmitted linguistically, "Habermas sees the *critique of ideology* as the means of unmasking the 'deceptions of language'" (Gadamer 1967: 30).[18] Habermas sees an analogy between psychoanalytical and sociological theory, inasmuch as their role is to lead human consciousness to emancipation from authority and/or obedience (Gadamer 1967: 40–42; cf. Habermas 1985b: 303–312).[19] That said, according to Habermas:

> Freud's metapsychology would have to be freed of its scientistic misconception of itself before it could serve fruitfully as part of a metahermeneutics. I do maintain, however, that any depth-hermeneutical interpretation of systematically distorted communication, whether it takes place in the analytical exchange between doctor and patient or informally, must implicitly presuppose exacting theoretical hypotheses of the sort which can be developed and grounded only within the framework of a *theory of communicative competence*. (Habermas 1985b: 312)

For this reason Habermas was concerned with constructing a "universal or formal pragmatics" modelled upon Chomsky's linguistics (1979: 1–68). Chomsky was interested in the underlying structures that all languages share; thus his purpose was to construct a "universal grammar". Habermas attempted to broaden Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence into a theory of communicative competence,[20] namely, a "universal pragmatics". "Universal pragmatics" is distinguished from

17 Cf. "Habermas asserts that although the Hegelian procedure of reflection is not presented in my analysis as fulfilled in an absolute consciousness … hermeneutical reflection must pass into a criticism of ideology" (Gadamer 1967: 29).

18 My italics for emphasis. For the different senses of the concept of "ideology" and the notion of *Ideologiekritik* see Geuss (1981).

19 See also Habermas (1968 and 1987: Chapters 10–12). See also Nichols (1972).

20 For Habermas's theory of communicative competence see McCarthy (1973).

linguistics, as the former examines speech-acts whereas the latter mostly deals with semantics (i.e. the meaning of sentences). For Habermas, the importance of "universal/formal pragmatics" lies in the fact that it is *reconstructive* and treats informants as *co*-subjects rather than as objects. In this way, "universal pragmatics" moved away from the "philosophy of the subject" by focusing on inter-subjectivity and mutual understanding. In Habermas's own words

> The task of universal pragmatics is to identify and reconstruct universal conditions of possible understanding [*Verständigung*] … I take the type of action imed at reaching understanding to be fundamental … Furthermore, as language is the specific medium of understanding at the sociocultural stage of evolution, I want to go a step further and single out explicit speech actions from other forms of communicative action. (Habermas 1979: 1)

The starting-point of "formal pragmatics" is the "validity claims" (viz. the implicit statements) that one makes when they act communicatively. According to Habermas, speech acts presuppose "four validity claims": the speaker claims to be understandable (*verständlich*),[21] to be communicating a true (*wahr*) statement, to be expressing their intentions truthfully (*wahrhaftig*) and to be making a right (*richtig*) proposition. In raising these "validity claims", the speaker supposes that they can be vindicated or redeemed.[22] Moreover:

> The goal of coming to an understanding [*Verständigung*] is to bring about an agreement [*Einverständnis*] that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding … Agreement is based on recognition of the corresponding validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness, and rightness. (Habermas 1979: 3)

The "validity basis of speech" that Habermas puts forward presupposes the possibility of an unconstrained dialogue to which all speakers have equal access and in which only the force of the better argument prevails. This is an "ideal speech situation", which in turn *pre*supposes and ideal communication community, that is, a form of social life in which communication would take place in this way. An obvious criticism is that actual contexts of argumentation do not correspond to the "ideal speech situation". Actually, the issue is whether Habermas is *prescribing* what communication *should* be like or *describing* what communication *is* like. It would be more accurate to say that Habermas claims that the potentiality of communicative rationality and the "ideal speech situation" is *inherent* in modern, advanced, industrial societies. The task of philosophy, according to Habermas, is

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21 It should be noted that "understandability" is not really raised as a claim which could be satisfied. Rather, it seems to be a *pre*condition that *must* be satisfied so that communication can be meaningful.

22 The German word for "redeem" or "vindicate" is "*einlösen*".

to bring forth this potentiality and to make people aware of its existence – this is the emancipatory potential of Habermas's critical theory. In this sense, the ideal communication community is *both* a description in that it is the unmasking of an *immanent* reality and a prescription in that this reality is the goal we should be aiming for. Habermas's emphasis on a dialogical mode of understanding and the agreement that derives therefrom points to his "consensus theory of truth". For, according to Habermas, "truth" constitutes one (of the four) "validity claim". The discursive redemption (*Einlösung*) of "truth claims" cannot be achieved by "correspondence theories of truth", i.e. by theories that postulate that what is true is that which corresponds to reality. In addition, "truth claims" can *neither* be redeemed by a "coherence theory", which postulates that a statement is true if it fits in well with other statements or propositions, *nor* by "pragmatism". According to Habermas, "truth" must be defined in terms of a projected consensus. This might at first seem a philosophical problem, but its importance lies in that a "consensus theory" allows moral and expressive statements, apart from factual statements, to become subject to discussion. This does not mean to say that the validity of claims and propositional truth are conflated. What it *does* mean, however, is that normative validity encompasses all factual, ethical and expressive statements.

In his *Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas takes up Piaget's concept of "decentred consciousness" in order to reconstruct the possible dimensions of rationalization in modern times. For Habermas, the historical process of rationalization parallels the development of children from an "egocentric" consciousness to a "decentred" one (Habermas 1995a/1986: 67–69). The growing "decentration of consciousness", which can be understood as a gain in rationality for humanity, recognizes clear demarcations between the "objective", "social" and "subjective" worlds. These worlds correspond to "truth claims", "right claims" and "truthfulness claims", respectively. Moreover, the speaker who engages in communicative action assumes three different basic attitudes that correspond to the abovementioned formal world concepts; that is, the speaker assumes an "objectivating attitude" toward the natural or objective world, a "norm-conformative attitude" toward societal processes and an "expressive attitude" toward their inner nature (or, for that matter, subjectivity) (Habermas 1995a/1986: 236–237). Combining the three basic attitudes with the three formal world concepts, we get nine fundamental "formal-pragmatic relations" between actors and their worlds. Nevertheless, Habermas advances the thesis that only six of them permit of rationalization, viz. "are suitable for the accumulation of knowledge" (1995a/1986: 237). As he puts it:

> The *objectivating attitude* toward external nature and society circumscribes a complex of *cognitive-instrumental rationality*, within which the production of knowledge can take the form of scientific and technical progress (including social technologies) … nothing can be learned in an objectivating attitude about inner nature qua subjectivity. The *norm-conformative attitude* toward society and inner nature circumscribes a complex of *moral-practical rationality*, within

> which the production of knowledge can take the form of a systematic treatment of legal and moral representations … [there exists] a scepticism concerning the possibility of giving a rational form to fraternal relations with a nonobjectivated nature … . Finally, the *expressive attitude* toward internal and external nature circumscribes a complex of *aesthetic-practical rationality*, within which the production of knowledge can take the form of authentic interpretation of needs, interpretations that have to be renewed in each historically changed set of circumstances. (Habermas 1995a/1986: 237–238)[23]

So far we have been concerned with "formal pragmatics". Clearly, "formal pragmatics" *in itself* is insufficient for Habermas's purposes. For "formal pragmatics" does *not* study interactions between speakers but only the speakers' pragmatic competence. Furthermore, "formal pragmatics" tends in itself to be very individualistic; it is a speaker who makes a "validity claim" that relates to one of the three formal world concepts by assuming one of the three aforesaid attitudes. As a result, "formal pragmatics" fails to grasp the social dimension involved in the structure of linguistic expressions: "From a sociological point of view it makes sense to begin with communicative action" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 274). A "theory of communicative action" takes the results of "formal pragmatics" and integrates them within a sociological perspective. As he says:

> A theory of communication worked out along these lines in formal-pragmatic terms could be made fruitful for a sociological theory of action if we could show how communicative acts – that is, speech acts or equivalent nonverbal expressions – take on the function of coordinating action and make their contribution to building up interactions. (Habermas 1995a/1986: 278)

For a sociological theory it is important to examine how interactions "can be interlaced in social spaces and historical times" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 275).

One of the central elements of the Habermasian "theory of communicative action" is the distinction between the genuinely communicative use of language to attain common goals[24] and "strategic" or "success-oriented" speech, parasitic on the former, which simulates a communicative orientation in order to achieve an ulterior purpose (1995a/1986: 288). Habermas attempted to clarify this distinction by employing J. L. Austin's use of "locutionary", "illocutionary" and "perlocutionary" speech acts. A "locutionary" act refers to the "content of propositional sentences (p) or of nominalised propositional sentences (that *p*)" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 288). More simply, a "locutionary" act involves just saying something. An "illocutionary act" is performed by our performing a "locutionary act": "The illocutionary role establishes the mode of a sentence ("M*p*") employed as a statement, promise, command,

23 My italics for emphasis.

24 "Reaching understanding is the inherent telos of human speech" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 287).

avowal, or the like" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 289). Finally, "through *perlocutionary acts* the speaker produces an effect upon the hearer" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 289). A "perlocutionary act" produces a certain effect via doing-something-by-saying-something. Habermas's argument is that "perlocutionary effects", which always tend to be implicit or concealed, exemplify "strategic action", as opposed to "communicative action". It is important to bear in mind that an "illocutionary act" is often inherent in a "locutionary act"; whatever we say will always be a statement, or a command, or a promise and so forth. Nevertheless, "*perlocutionary effects* arise from the fact that illocutionary acts are embedded in contexts of interaction" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 289). "Illocutionary acts" are always embedded within situations of interaction. The distinction that Habermas draws between "illocutionary" and a "perlocutionary" act remains, on my view, unsatisfactory. For, if – for instance – an "illocutionary act" is a command, its purpose is to cause a "perlocutionary effect" and this is, clearly, a sign of "strategic action".

Habermas makes a further distinction by classifying speech acts in accordance with their illocutionary effects. Thus, he distinguishes between "constative speech acts" "in which *elementary propositional* (*assertoric*) *sentences* are used", "expressive speech acts" "in which *elementary experiential sentences* (in the first person present) appear" and "regulative speech acts" "in which either *elementary imperative sentences* (as in promises) appear" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 309). It is important to note that these three kinds of "illocutionary speech acts" correspond to the three Habermasian "world attitudes", namely, the "objectivating", neutral attitude to facts in the world, the "norm-conformative" attitude to the social world and the "expressive attitude" to the speaker's own subjective world, respectively. Habermas notes that "regulative" and "expressive" speech acts are "constituted for" "normatively regulated" and "dramaturgical action", while "constative" speech acts are "constitutive for" – what he terms – "conversation" which in a broad sense includes argumentation. Thus Habermas arrives arrives at a typology of "linguistically mediated interaction" in which "normatively regulated" and "dramaturgical" action appear, along with conversation, as "three pure types – or better, *limit cases* – of communicative action" (Habermas 1995a/1996: 327–328). However, on my view, these "three pure types" of communicative action are problematical. For what is the relationship between this model and the earlier discussion, where "dramaturgical" and "normatively regulated action" are clearly distinguished from "communicative action"? I find Habermas's position ambivalent in this respect.

Crucial to the Habermasian sociological theory of action is the connection of "empirical" to "formal" pragmatics. Firstly, the methodological restrictions of "formal pragmatics" have to be relaxed: "This task consists in reversing step by step the strong idealizations by which we have built up the concept of communicative action" (Habermas 1995a/1996: 328 and 330). "Formal pragmatics" must also refer to a *performative attitude* which includes the "objectivating", "norm conformative" and "expressive" attitudes with their respective reference to the "objective", "social" and "subjective" worlds. In actual communications participants relate to all of these worlds simultaneously. Moreover, "in addition to

communicative action, we include in our analysis the resources of the background knowledge (that is, lifeworlds) from which participants feed their interpretations" (Habermas 1995a/1996: 330). Secondly, "empirical pragmatics" needs "a formal pragmatic point of departure" which provides "the conceptual instruments needed to recognize the rational basis of linguistic communication in the confusing complexity of the everyday scenes observed". Without a "formal pragmatic" an "empirical pragmatic" cannot distinguish between the literal, ironic and playful usage of language, nor to identify systematically distorted communication, which Habermas clearly differentiates from conscious deception or manipulation as forms of concealed strategic action (Habermas 1995a/1996: 331–332).

I have already touched upon the connection between the Habermasian theory of "rational action" and the historical process of "societal rationalization" when I explained Piaget's notion of the "decentred consciousness". As mentioned above, the attainment in modernity of a "decentred" understanding – that is, one which is neither egocentric, like that of a baby, nor sociocentric, as in magical or mythical thought – involves the differentiation of the "social" and "subjective" worlds from the "objective" world. What is significant is that, for Habermas, this process of differentiation takes place within – what he calls – the "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*) and that it is a central process in its rationalization. What does Habermas mean by "*Lebenswelt*"? It might be useful to quote Habermas at length here:

> I can introduce here the concept of the *Lebenswelt* or lifeworld, to begin with as the correlate of processes of reaching understanding. Subjects acting communicatively always come to an understanding in the *horizon of a lifeworld*. Their lifeworld is formed from more or less diffuse, always unproblematic, background convictions. This lifeworld background serves as a source of situation definitions that are presupposed by participants as unproblematic. In their interpretive accomplishments the members of a communication community demarcate the one objective world and their inter-subjectively shared social world from the subjective worlds of individuals and (other) collectives. The world-concepts and the corresponding validity claims provide the formal scaffolding with which those acting communicatively order problematic contexts of situations, that is, those requiring agreement, in their lifeworld, which is presupposed as unproblematic. (Habermas 1995a/1996: 70)

It is true that Habermas's use of the term "*Lebenswelt*" is often opaque. This is due to the fact that Habermas conceptualizes the "*Lebenswelt*" by drawing upon different theoretical traditions at one and the same time; he merges the traditions of Husserl and Schutz, Wittgenstein and Searle, and contrasts the "communicative rationality" which characterizes the "lifeworld" with "purposive rationality". Part of the problem lies, as many critics have pointed out,[25] in the fact that the term "lifeworld" used to be an epistemological term which was developed in the

25 See, for example, Schnädelbach (1991).

context of a transcendental philosophy or phenomenology. In the phenomenology of Husserl and Schutz the concept of "*Lebenswelt*" was tied to the first person singular of the researcher or, for that matter, the first person plural of a group of researchers who, in reflecting on the "conditions of possibility" of their knowledge, encountered an insurmountable horizon of their possibilities for understanding. Habermas, of course, criticizes the phenomenological emphasis on individual perceptions taken from the "philosophy of consciousness" and shifts the emphasis in accordance with his theory of communication. As Habermas puts it:

> If we now relinquish the basic concepts of the philosophy of consciousness in which Husserl dealt with the problem of the lifeworld, we can think of the lifeworld as represented by a culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretive patterns. (Habermas 1995b/1989: 124)

Surely, the social actors who communicate within the "*Lebenswelt*" are not always able to know the 'real' content thereof. It is rather the case that:

> … the lifeworld appears as a reservoir of taken-for-granteds, of unshaken convictions that participants in communication draw upon in cooperation processes of interpretation. Single elements, specific taken-for-granteds, are, however, mobilized in the form of consensual and yet problematizable knowledge only when they become relevant to a situation. (Habermas 1995b/1989: 124)

Put more simply, the "lifeworld" is the realm of tradition, viz. of the values and knowledge handed down to the participants by their ancestors and perpetuated across the generations. These values and knowledge remain, to a large extent, unquestioned by the participants themselves. In this way, the total dissolution of the "*Lebenswelt*" is prevented. However, the debate between Habermas and Gadamer over the "universality of hermeneutics" has demonstrated that Habermas would not go all the way towards accepting – what he considers to be – Gadamer's unwarranted conservatism. Although Habermas accepts the significance of *hermeneutical* understanding, he holds the view that social science must be *critical* as well. Therefore, Habermas suggests that parts of the "lifeworld" are "thematized" and subjected to discussion (*immanent critique*). And, according to the Habermasian communicative logic, decisions are reached by the 'force of the better argument'. I shall return to the issue of 'critique' later on in order to point out some of the problems which emerge from this thesis.

For the time being, we should direct our attention to the fact that Habermas finds this intersubjective conception of the "lifeworld" unsatisfactory. For:

> While the communication-theoretic concept of the lifeworld we have been discussing gets away from the philosophy of consciousness, it nevertheless still lies on the same analytical level as the transcendental lifeworld concept of phenomenology. (Habermas 1995b/1989: 135)

He, therefore, attempts to demarcate "an object domain of social science"; this he considers to be the "*everyday concept of the lifeworld*" (Habermas 1995b/1989: 135). Habermas maintains that in their everyday interactions people do not encounter one another as "participants" in their "lifeworld"; rather, they give *narrations* of events that take place in the context of the "lifeworld". He defines "narration" as:

> … a specialized form of constative speech that serves to describe sociocultural events and objects. Actors base their narrative presentations on a lay concept of the 'world', in the sense of the everyday world or lifeworld, which defines the totality of states of affairs that can be reported in true stories. (Habermas 1995b/1989: 136)

It is important to clarify what is at issue here. Whereas *narrative presentation* refers to what is innerwordly, *theoretical presentation* is intended to explain the reproduction of the "*Lebenswelt*" itself. This reproduction, Habermas argues, is three-fold; it is "cultural reproduction", "social integration" and "socialization". Corresponding to these processes are "the structural components of the lifeworld: culture, society, person" (Habermas 1995b/1989: 138).

As already mentioned, the participants of the "lifeworld" *thematize* certain aspects thereof in order to assess their validity. In this way, certain norms and values transmitted across the generations are *criticized from a participant's perspective*. This thesis becomes problematical when one considers the foregoing in relation to the Habermasian view concerning the "meaning" of the social sciences and the role of the investigator. This becomes apparent in Habermas's discussion of the logic of *Verstehen* in the first part of the *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (1981a). There Habermas maintains that "There is an interdependence between the basic concepts of social action and the methodology of understanding social actions" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 102), and tries to establish the very strong thesis that "meaning", "intelligibility" and "understanding" are, as a matter of fact, inseparable from "validity", "rationality" and "evaluation". What, on my view, *is* problematical is Habermas's claim that "In order to understand an utterance in the paradigm case of a speech act oriented to reaching understanding, the interpreter has to be familiar with the conditions of its validity" (Habermas 1995a/1986: 115). In other words, the social scientist in carrying out his/her research will have to understand the *reasons* that lie behind each "validity claim"; but the interpreter will not be able to understand the implicit reasons which make the claim concerned valid, unless he/she understands the *rationality* of reasons. However, so the Habermasian logic goes, in order to decide whether a reason lying behind the "validity claim" is rational, the investigator has to *evaluate* it. The moot point is the following:

> But if, in order to understand an expression, the interpreter must bring to mind the reasons with which a speaker would if necessary and under suitable conditions defend its validity, he is himself drawn into the process of assessing validity claims. For reasons are of such a nature that they cannot be described in

> the attitude of a third person, that is, without reactions if affirmation or negation or abstention. (Habermas 1995a/1986: 115)

Because the "object domain" of social enquiry is the "symbolically prestructured" reality that is produced and reproduced by speaking and acting subjects, the social scientist has access to it only by way of *understanding* the *meaning* of the objects he studies. This he/she cannot do, according to Habermas, in the "third person" attitude of a disengaged observer. However, I do not think that the passage quoted above sufficiently explains why the interpreter is necessarily "drawn into the process of assessing validity claims". For I believe that one can understand the "implicit reasons" of a statement, as well as the "rationality" of those reasons *without* actually taking a firm position on them. Incidentally, Habermas allows that the "third person" may react by abstaining to the reasons for that which he/she observes. But does this not mean that the investigator does *not* actually have to evaluate the validity claims that the participants of the "lifeworld" make? I cannot see the connection that Habermas attempts to establish between the "description" of statements and their "evaluation".

In relation to this problem, Herbert Schnädelbach has put forward the view that

> The basis for Habermas's normativism – which proves that his project is indeed a critical theory – is not to be found in his universal or formal pragmatics; it is quite definitely to be sought in his material convictions on the relation between 'subject' and 'object' in social theory as a whole, i.e. in his theory of the relation between communicative action and lifeworld. (Habermas 1991: 16)

Therefore, Schnädelbach argues that this is why Habermas introduces the concept of the "*Lebenswelt*" in the first place. If Schnädelbach is correct, it follows that the investigator is him-/herself part of the "lifeworld". In that case, it is perhaps understandable that the social scientist should be "drawn into" the process of *understanding* validity claims. But, again, *understanding* validity claims is *not* necessarily the same as *assessing* them. There is also another problem with the above Habermasian thesis. For, if the social scientist can only be part of the "*Lebenswelt*" him-/herself and can thereby study it only *hermeneutically*,[26] sociological investigation can only be *culturally specific*. The implications of this, may, nevertheless, be, from a Habermasian point of view, disquieting. As every reader of Habermas will know, Habermas is inclined toward a universalism which would not allow cultural particularity.[27]

For Habermas, the rationalization of the "lifeworld" has been the major achievement of modernity. This process of rationalization to which the "lifeworld"

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26 Habermas would not allow the researcher to adopt a 'third person' attitude.

27 See: "Habermas's critique culminates in questioning the immanentism of transcendental philosophy with respect to its historical conditions, conditions upon which he himself is dependent" (Gadamer 1967: 36).

is subject is heading toward an hypothetical end state in which cultural traditions are constantly criticized and re-assessed, political forms are dependent upon formal procedures of justification, and individual citizens are increasingly autonomous. Read in this way, Habermas is strikingly similar to Hegel's conception of the movement of the historical process toward an end point in which all individuals realize their freedom in "ethical life" (*Sittlichkeit*). In that final stage of history humans achieve "mutual recognition", for Hegel, and "mutual understanding", for Habermas. However, and this is where the major difference between Hegel and Habermas lies, Habermas holds the view that the ever increasing differentiation of the structural components of the "lifeworld" causes a paradox. For, the more the "lifeworld" is rationalized, the more it is subject to *systemic imperatives* (Habermas 1995b/1989: 148 ff). As opposed to Hegel, Habermas's optimism for the modern condition is not unqualified. That said, Habermas does not introduce the concept of the "system" into his theory solely for *historical* reasons (i.e. because he believes that the "system" is part and parcel of the 'modern' condition). The reasons for introducing it are *methodological* too, for Habermas believes that the perspective of *verstehende* sociology is too limited and one-sided. According to Habermas, the concept of the "lifeworld" alone "is insufficient to solve the problems raised by a theory of social order". "An adequate theory of society must reach out beyond forms of sociality based on groups of people and *beyond the intended results of action*";[28] for this to be done, a sociological theory must draw upon a "functionalist system" perspective (Joas 1991: 105). However, Habermas's use of "functionalism" has been challenged by Hans Joas, who argues that all theories of "social action" necessarily have an answer to the problem of "social order". Therefore, it is wrong to oppose "social action" (to which Habermas imputes a meaning of "lifewordly" interpersonal immediacy) to "social order". As Joas (1991) puts it:

> The theory of action does not per se compete with the theory of social order. It does not at all contain the empirical assumption that all results of action are covered by the intentions of the actors, or lie within the control and intuitive knowledge of the actors. (105)

Historically, there is the "uncoupling" of the "system" from the "lifeworld". In the first instance, the "lifeworld" is *mediated* by the "system", that is, it is influenced by it. But, what is really crucial for Habermas, the "mediatization" of the "lifeworld" takes on the form of the latter's "*colonization*", when the "systemic media" of money and power begin to displace "communicative action" in order to allow place for "action oriented to success". As a result, the "lifeworld" is *instrumentalized*, and this is where Habermas draws upon Max Weber (Habermas 1995b/1989: 113–197). It could also be argued that the "Intermediate Reflections" of the second volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action* is Habermas's answer to Max Horkheimer's and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

28 My italics for emphasis.

(1992/1979). For, in a sense, these "intermediate reflections" constitute Habermas's *own* 'dialectic of Enlightenment'. Inherent in the Habermasian logic is that, to a certain degree, the "colonization of the lifeworld" is an inevitable process; the increasing rationalization of the "lifeworld", which is characterized by the "rationality of argument", in a way *necessitates* the emergence of the system. This happens because, as the rationality of the "lifeworld" increases, there are *more and more* issues to be discussed, while not all of them can possibly be included in the agenda. In consequence, certain debates have to be "taken out of" the "lifeworld" and "shifted into" the "system" (Habermas 1995b/1989: 153–197).

A reader of the "Intermediate Reflections" of the second volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action* is more likely to end up with the conclusion that, for Habermas, "lifeworld" is good and "system" is bad. Perhaps this is an unfair judgement, because, although it is true that Habermas praises the "lifeworld" and deplores its colonization by the "system", he nonetheless thinks a "theory of action" *in itself* is insufficient. However, I would agree with Joas when he argues that a "system perspective" is, in fact, unnecessary. All the more so, as it leads to an empirical fallacy. Habermas has stressed that the perspective of the "system" is a third-person perspective, as opposed to the first-person perspective of the "lifeworld". But how can one adopt this third person perspective, that is, step out of the "lifeworld" in order to examine the "system" in its totality? As I have already said above, this is impossible even for the social scientist him-/herself.[29] This is the empirical fallacy I am referring to. Furthermore, if, as I think it is the case, Habermas intends the lifeworld/system distinction to be serving an *analytical* purpose, then in *actual life* this distinction is non-existent. In everyday life the "lifeworld" and the "system" interpenetrate each other. This means that *not only* does the "system" intrude into the "lifeworld", but *also* that the "lifeworld" itself intrudes into the "system" and thereby influences systemic processes. What I am suggesting is that, in fact, there is a way out of this process of colonization of the "lifeworld" by the "system". Communicative action can push the "system" back, as it were, so as to expand its own sphere of influence. This *can* happen by way of a democracy that sets into motion a politically effective discussion that brings the potential of "systemic imperatives" into a controlled relation to the "lifeworld" of which we are part. Habermas considered such a possibility in his essay "Technical Progress and the Social Life-World",[30] where he discussed how democratic discussion can bring technological progress under control or – better – how it can direct technology to serve society's own purposes. He says:

29 Cf. "… it suffices to abide by the difference in types between purposive-rational and communicative action when developing the difference between system and lifeworld, and not to weigh this difference down with the problem of the perspectives of the first and third persons and their relation to one another" (Schnädelbach 1991: 19).

30 Habermas (1971a: 50–61).

> On the one hand, such discussion could enlighten those who act politically about the tradition-bound self-understanding of their interests in relation to what is technically possible and feasible. On the other hand, they would be able to judge practically, in the light of their now articulated and newly interpreted needs, the direction and the extent to which they want to develop technical knowledge for the future. (Habermas 1971a: 61)

After all, this is what Habermas calls the "dialectic of potential and will" (Habermas 1971a: 61). One should also bear in mind that the development of technical or scientific knowledge can actually contribute to the increase of communication. After all, media such as the television and the radio can be used as channels through which citizens are informed about a diversity of issues; in this way, dialogue is reinforced. Therefore, it is wrong to assume that technological artefacts "colonize" the "lifeworld".

Briefly, Habermas's *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* tries to re-define the role and significance of critical theory. The earlier members of the Frankfurt School of sociology propounded a dialectic that was only "negative";[31] hence their failure to consider the "positive" and "constructive" potential of a critique which aims at bringing forth the normativity that is *inherent* (or *immanent*) in modernity itself. One may wonder why Habermas had to devote so much space in *describing*, as well as *evaluating* by means of an *immanent critique*, the theorists of such thinkers as Weber, Durkheim, Mead, Parsons, Horkheimer and Adorno, Husserl and Schutz. For some, this may be a weakness. But there is an argument to be made in favour of Habermas. One can see the two volumes of *The Theory of Communicative Action* as an history of theory. Viewed in this way, Habermas's intention is to *criticize* these theories on the basis of their respective premises *in order to* bring out their latent potential. As Habermas has put it: Modernity "… *has to create its normativity out of itself*" (Habermas 1994a/1990: 7). And it has been Habermas's intention to formulate just those standards that would allow modernity to interpret itself in a way that is self-critical (*immanent critique*), but which also gives some basis for normative self-reassurance (*Selbstvergewisserung*). This basis of normativity has been provided by the Habermasian model of "communicative action".[32]

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31 E.g. Adorno (1974), Horkheimer (1972), Adorno and Horkheimer (1992/1979). For some commentaries see Jay (1973 and 1978) and Rose (1978).

32 For some commentaries on Habermas's work see McCarthy (1978), Bernstein (1985 and 1995), Outhwaite (1994), Thompson and Held (1982), White (1988) and Dews (1988/1987 and 1999). On Habermas's critique of positivism see Keat (1981). For a very short introduction on Habermas see Finlayson (2005). For the work of the Frankfurt School, including that of Habermas, see Held (1980) and Geuss (1981), among others.

Conclusion

This book seeks to carve out a niche for itself in social theory. Its aspiration is to contribute to the genealogy/critical theory (or Foucault/Habermas) debate. It is doing this by showing that there is another aspect of critical theory that has often been misunderstood. 'Critical theory' is associated with the Frankfurt School of Sociology. I have demonstrated that some version of 'critical theory' can be found in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[33] In Hegel's *Phenomenology* critique takes the form of an 'immanent critique'. It is wrong to assume that 'critique' in Hegel means a dialectical *method*. This is where the misunderstanding lies. What *is* 'dialectical' in the 1807 *Phenomenology* is the reality that Hegel is describing phenomenologically, a reality in which humans are caught between the realm of the *phenomenon* and *empirical reality*. This is what Hegel means by "*experience*" ("*Erfahrung*"); in rendering explicit what is latent in this experience, Hegel unmasks the contradictions implicit therein, without bringing in any criteria from without (hence Hegel's *immanent critique*). I have argued elsewhere that, through this description, Hegel attempts to render *explicit* what is *implicit* in this experience in a way that is similar to the Socratic art of 'midwifery' (Sembou 1999 and 2012a).[34] So the book puts forth a specific interpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (in line with my previous work) and argues that the form of critique found in the *Phenomenology* is an early version of 'critical theory', so to speak. This, I submit, constitutes the book's contribution to critical theory.

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a phenomenological account of the "experience of consciousness", i.e. of the dialectical movement which consciousness effects on itself in its attempt to comprehend the world. By rendering explicit what is implicit in this experience, Hegel unmasks the contradictions that are latent therein, without bringing in any criteria from without (hence an *immanent* critique); each one of the "shapes of consciousness" proves to be inadequate on its own terms. I argue that Hegel's notion of "experience" ("*Erfahrung*") is much richer than Foucault's genealogical accounts. Nevertheless, arguably, one of the problems of Hegelian phenomenology is that it does not allow for the possibility of it being criticized from a viewpoint external to it. This is where the importance of Foucault's genealogy lies; for it practises an *external* critique by turning all entrenched beliefs upside-down, thereby providing an alternative perspective. Its limitations lie in that it is unable to account for the superiority of its own interpretation vis-à-vis others. By contrast, by presenting itself as a "science of the experience of consciousness", Hegel's phenomenology does not in the first instance claim to be a superior form of knowledge. Initially, science comes on the

33 See also Grant (2010) who contributes to an understanding of dialectical thought and Foucault's genealogy by reading one through the other.

34 Recently Winfield (2013) has also referred to the similarity of the project of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and "the Socratic immanent critique", although he does not look at specific dialogues and does not refer to 'midwifery' or 'maieutic' (13–14, 16).

scene, it merely *appears*; by coming forth, it presents itself as a *phenomenon*. As such, it has not as yet actualized itself, and so cannot justify itself against another mode of knowledge, from the standpoint of which science is 'untrue', imperfect, knowledge. For this reason science must liberate itself from its appearance and become *true* (i.e. actualized) science. As I have shown, the appearance of science consists in its identifying step by step what it itself is.

Much of the debate in the philosophy of social science (Anglo-American and continental) has centred around the differences between the natural and social sciences (see e.g. Keat and Urry 1975). In this controversy hermeneutics has challenged positivism, neo-positivism and rationalism. Hermeneutic theories include phenomenology,[35] existentialism,[36] linguistic analysis, pragmatism and neo-Marxist critical theory.[37] Hermeneutic thinkers have questioned the (neo-)positivist assumption that social-cum-political reality can be understood scientifically, on the model of the natural sciences, and that human behaviour follows law-like patterns. For their part, hermeneutic theories have been criticized on the grounds that they provide arbitrary interpretations, which cannot be challenged from without (that is, from a viewpoint external to the interpretation itself). In the 1980s and early 1990s Kenneth Burke (1984), Richard Harvey Brown (1987) and Pierre Bourdieu (1990) developed a dialectical-critical hermeneutic, which exposes not only the limitations of positivist epistemology but also those of subjectivist hermeneutics. The foregoing social thinkers accept that social practices are the product of conscious social actors, but also recognize that a lot is happening behind the backs or below the awareness of human beings. Using the hermeneutic metaphors of textuality and language, they take social structures to be the grammar of social texts and regard meaning(s) as speech acts. Accordingly, a dialectical-critical hermeneutic sees humans as creating meaning, while, at the same time, taking account of social structures or factors which may not be perceived by social actors (this is how it construes the hermeneutical circle). In the words of Brown (1987):

> Thus to the extent that society is the product of conscious human intentions, a Diltheyan hermeneutic will better encompass what is salient. But to the extent that history is made "behind the backs and against the wills" of even powerful

35 Wahl (1929) and Kojève (1947) saw certain similarities between Hegel's phenomenology and the phenomenology of Husserl. In the late 1960s a famous exponent of hermeneutical phenomenology was Paul Ricoeur (1969a, 1969b; see also 1974). (Ricoeur and Gadamer also made hermeneutical phenomenology known in the United States.)

36 As we saw in Chapter 1 above, Hegelian 'phenomenology' influenced existential phenomenology in France in the 1930s and 1940s, especially through Jean Wahl's, Jean Hyppolite's and Alexandre Kojève's readings of Hegel. See Wahl (1929), Hyppolite (1946) and Kojève (1947).

37 See Habermas (1968 and 1987), where he discusses Kantianism, Marxism, positivism, linguistics, pragmatism, Dilthey's hermeneutics and philosophy of science. In this famous work he examines the relationship between knowledge and interests. See also Dallmayr (1972) and Habermas and Lenhardt (1973).

> persons, then structural and dialectical modes of social-textual analysis are also needed. (135)

And he goes on to say:

> If these are limits to hermeneutic interpretation, they do not require a rejection of the metaphor of society as text. For it is precisely within the textual metaphor that the antinomies of interpretation and explanation and of freedom and constraint may be held in double vision. This is because textual analysis offers its own mode of explanation: semiotics. That is, in addition to hermeneutic interpretation that focuses on semantics and pragmatics, textual analysis of society also engages in structural explanation that focuses on syntactics and grammatics. Unlike the rupture between the discourse of interpretation and explanation within the social sciences generally, however, these two discourses may be dialectically conjoined in the metaphor of society as text. To develop this point I need to sketch a theory of language in light of structuralism and semiotics. (135)

The sources of semiotics are, first, "the pragmatic phenomenology of signs invented by Charles Peirce (and later vulgarized in American symbolic interactionalism), and the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure" (Brown 1987: 135–136). As Brown (1987) says, the major divisions of the social sciences "seem to be reproduced within the social-textual analysis itself". These are: positivism contra romanticism, explanation contra understanding, objectivity contra subjectivity, distantiation contra identification, language contra speech, syntactics contra semantics, system contra life-world, structuralism contra hermeneutics (136–137). For Brown (1987), "The important question is not how textual analysis can be reconciled with positivist sociology, but how romantic and positivistic ways of knowing can be sublated within the textual (or any other) metaphor of society" (137). "Semiotics" and "hermeneutics" are "dialectically interdependent" in the following sense:

> *Hermeneutic interpretation* keeps this structural grammar in the background in order to focus on the meanings that are generated within it. *Semiotics* keeps the intended meanings in the background in order to focus on the structures by which they are generated. (138)[38]

Accordingly: "if hermeneutic thought destroys the fiction of absolute objectivity in positivist social science, semiotic thought reveals the structural limits of a purely subjectivist interpretive sociology" (Brown 1987: 140). Although "the textual view draws on the tradition of Western humanism", "this humanism is now

38 My italics for emphasis.

transvalued through *self-reflective criticism*" (Brown 1987: 141).[39] Brown (1987) concluded:

> My representation of society as text is thus intended neither to bury positivist social science nor to praise romantic human studies, but instead to affirm them both, once they are reconstituted and conjoined on a more sophisticated and reflective level. For the textual metaphor invites us not only to reject the naive copy theory of traditional positivism but also to renounce the naive intuitionism of traditional romanticism. Instead, our attention is now focused on the dialectical interplay between rules and actions. *Sprache* and *Rede:* the constraints and freedom of persons writing, being written into, and reading their worlds. (Brown 1987: 142)

In this book I have attempted to assess the significance and implications of Hegelian 'phenomenology' and Foucauldian 'genealogy' for the humanities and social sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). In Chapter 4 I considered how Hegel's 'phenomenology' and Foucault's 'genealogy' challenged the 'correspondence theory of truth'. I also showed that they question foundationalism and point toward a non-foundational knowledge. I submit that, by combining the insights of Hegelian 'phenomenology' and Foucauldian 'genealogy', a social scientific knowledge without presuppositions *is* possible. A dialectical approach of 'phenomenology' and 'genealogy' starts from the phenomenological notion of "experience" and recognizes that humans are conscious beings. Simultaneously, however, it acknowledges that individuals in a given society are caught in power relations which may be beyond their control. Accordingly, it regards human beings as able to perceive the inadequacies and/or contradictions that are latent in their understanding of the world and social-cum-political life and to revise their understanding (*immanent* critique), while at the same time taking account of the fact that humans are implicated in relations of power of which they may not be fully aware and/or which they may not be able to render explicit. A genealogy of political institutions and social practices not only unearths the power relations that has produced them and heretofore justified their existence but, more importantly, enables us to see the limitations of current arrangements and, concurrently, to think our social-cum-political life in different terms (*external* critique). This dialectical approach of 'phenomenology' and 'genealogy', therefore, challenges (neo-)positivism, while also exposing the shortcomings of phenomenology (hermeneutics).

39 My italics for emphasis.

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